

Developing and Revitalizing Rural Communities Through Arts and Creativity:

An International Literature Review and Inventory of Resources

Prepared for the Creative City Network of Canada, March 2009

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Developing and Revitalizing Rural Communities Through Arts and Creativity:

A Literature Review

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Photo: Ross Creek Centre for the Arts, Canning, Nova Scotia

Cover photo: **The Ross Creek Centre for the Arts, Canning, Nova Scotia**

The Ross Creek Centre for the Arts is a research and development centre for the arts of all disciplines and cultures. Located on 186 acres of farm and forest overlooking the Bay of Fundy, the Centre offers programs and facilities for artists and students of the visual arts, performing arts, literary arts, architecture, film, and fine craft. The Centre has two performances spaces, two galleries, three visual arts studios, and an outdoor stage, and offers professional artist residencies at the Centre's multi-disciplinary artist colony.

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Abstract

This paper provides an overview of English-language academic research literature and policy-related studies with respect to cultural development in rural communities. The paper is organized into four sections:

1. **The nature of arts and cultural activity in rural communities**, which discusses four key themes in the literature: (1) the nature of arts activity in rural communities; (2) festivals as community-building practices; (3) touring activity; and (4) the role of information and computer technologies. Aboriginal/First Nations cultural practices are also noted.
2. **The community context for the arts development and vitality**, which considers: (1) critical ingredients for building arts-active communities, (2) the potential for creative destruction, and (3) community reinvention using the arts.
3. **The role of the arts in economic diversification and revitalization**, which outlines (1) two informing conceptual frames: regional (or rural) development platforms, and an economic perspective on cultural resources, and (2) key themes and cautions regarding economic development roles for the arts in rural communities.
4. **Governance strategies and initiatives**, which outlines some of the reoccurring themes among policy efforts and recommendations to support and sustain rural cultural development.

A set of case study examples accompanies this paper to illustrate the variety of ways arts and cultural/creative development is being pursued in the revitalization of Canadian rural communities (Annex A).

Résumé

Cet article présente une vue d'ensemble de la documentation issue de la recherche universitaire de langue anglaise et d'études portant sur les politiques en matière de développement culturel au sein des collectivités rurales. L'article comporte quatre sections :

1. **L'état de l'activité culturelle et artistique au sein des collectivités rurales**, élabore sur les quatre thèmes principaux dont fait état la documentation : (1) l'état de l'activité artistique au sein des collectivités rurales, (2) les festivals, en tant que pratiques pour l'édification d'une communauté, (3) les activités de tournées; ainsi que (4) le rôle des technologies informatique et de l'information. Les pratiques mises de l'avant par les autochtones et les Premières nations y sont également abordées.
2. **Le contexte communautaire propice à l'épanouissement et à la vitalité du secteur des arts**, se penche sur : (1) les composantes nécessaires à l'édification de communautés activement engagées dans la pratique artistique, (2) la possibilité d'une destruction de la créativité, ainsi que (3) le recours aux arts à l'intention du renouveau communautaire.
3. **Le rôle des arts dans la diversification et la relance de l'économie**, met en lumière (1) deux cadres conceptuels qui font le point sur : les plateformes propres au développement régional (ou rural) et les ressources culturelles, dans une perspective économique, ainsi que (2) des thèmes clés et des mises en garde concernant la portée du secteur des arts sur l'essor économique au sein des collectivités rurales.
4. **Les stratégies et les projets de gouvernance**, font état de thèmes récurrents au sein des projets de politiques publiques et des recommandations visant à soutenir et à appuyer le développement culturel en milieu rural.

Cet article compte également des exemples issus d'études de cas, qui témoignent des diverses façons dont le développement des arts, de la culture et de la créativité sont mis à profit de la relance des collectivités rurales canadiennes (Annexe A – en anglais seulement).

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Cultureshed – an area nourished by what is cultivated locally...fed by pools of human and natural history...the efforts of writers, artists, performers, scholars and chefs who contribute to a vital and diverse culture.¹

Introduction

Canada's rural regions are in a time of transition. Challenges for rural communities in Canada include declining and aging populations, problems with youth retention, limited economic and social opportunities for residents, depleting natural resources, loss of local services, and higher costs of living (Nicholls, 2005). Similar situations are found in rural communities in other countries (see companion articles by Dr. Patrick Overton, Kim Dunphy, and Dr. Lidia Varbanova). As rural communities re-envision and reposition themselves, they are seeking to revitalize, diversify their economic base, enhance their quality of life, and reinvent themselves for new functions and roles. Literature on the arts and creative business development in rural communities is largely positioned within this context.

Issues related to the changing nature of rural communities are articulated within numerous conferences, forums, and publications, which feature discussions on rural regeneration, social enterprise, community capacity building, and "investment for rural community creative and cultural capital" (Smiles, 2006, p. 3). Some writers are arguing that fostering arts and cultural programs will help stem the "current tide of youth out-migration and declining quality of life" in rural areas (Brotman, 2007, cited in Nolte, 2007, p. 4; see also Foundation for Rural Living, 2004; Nicholls, 2005). Others are pointing to specific issues, dynamics, and strategies that influence the development and vitality of arts activities in rural communities (e.g., Shifferd, 2005; Rodning Bash, 2006). "Creative economy" opportunities have been added to traditional social/community development views of the role of the arts in a community (e.g., Wojan, Lambert & McGranahan, 2007b), and to ideas to engage and retain youth (see Figure 1).

¹ Term developed by artists and farmers through project of The Wormfarm, Wisconsin (in Gard Ewell, 2006).

Figure 1. Shifting perspectives: Youth engagement, retention, and the arts

Socially based views of the role of the arts in rural communities have diversified in recent years, and are increasingly coupled with ideas of “creative economy” opportunities. Initiatives to address youth retention and engagement in rural communities serve as a microcosm of these broader shifts.

Traditionally, recommendations for youth engagement and retention in rural communities commonly include references to both recreational and cultural initiatives and to building economic/career opportunities, but these items have been addressed separately and rarely combined as a strategy. Arts-involved projects for youth engagement generally highlight building social connections, self-esteem, and community knowledge. Viewed within a “recreational and cultural opportunities” lens, the focus has been on creating opportunities to “increase community participation and cohesion, develop volunteerism and leadership skills, and engage young people to stay and build their lives in their communities” (Canadian Rural Partnership, 2004, p. 6). For example, the Mobilisation of Young Rural Developers project in Quebec encouraged youth to “participate in developing art projects symbolizing their community to help increase their self-esteem, sense of belonging, and interest in their community,” and included partnerships with seniors’ homes and other organizations to showcase community life, living heritage, history, and other aspects of their communities (Nicholls, 2005, p. 15).

While these social and community-focused aspects of meaningful cultural engagement are still very important, emerging recommendations and initiatives indicate that these traditional views on the contributions of arts activities are diversifying to incorporate ideas about cultural/creative employment and enterprises. For example, recent youth-retention recommendations for Prince Edward County, Ontario, which faces a constant issue of youth out-migration, include involving youth in civic government, *promoting youth entrepreneurship and a “creative rural economy,”* and creating partnerships with nearby post-secondary institutions (Donald, 2008, p.17, emphasis added). In the UK, the *East Midlands Rural Creative Industries Regional Report* notes that the presence of galleries, studios, musicians, performance venues and companies can “often provide aspirational jobs and examples of entrepreneurship that are particularly attractive to young people (helping with retention)” (Burns & Kirkpatrick, 2008b, p. 34). Small businesses in the creative industries in this region also expressed interest in providing student internships and recruiting locally trained employees.

In regional Australia, creative industries are being promoted as a way of retaining youth and offering employment opportunities. Gibson (2008) argues that youth often naturally develop the skills needed for creative industries (music, computer skills), so as an employment scheme it is a natural fit. However, a disconnect still exists between research studies of youth out-migration and the growth of creative industries in regional areas – the two could be brought together to develop population retention strategies – and must also relate to issues of identity (Gibson & Argent, 2008).

What is rural? National research in Canada uses at least six alternative definitions of *rural*, each emphasizing different geographic criteria such as population size, population density, labour market context, or settlement context. In *Definitions of "Rural,"* Statistics Canada recommends that a good starting point is the "rural and small town" definition: "the population living in towns and municipalities outside the commuting zone of larger urban centres (i.e., outside the commuting zone of centres with population of 10,000 or more)" (du Plessis & Clemenson, 2002, p. 1). In this paper, we have kept this working definition in mind while recognizing researchers' own definitions of rural may differ and, in general, take a flexible approach to the definition.

The arts in rural communities span a variety of activities, from informal activities and professional artist practices to (usually small) creative business enterprises. According to Statistics Canada data, in 2001 there were 22,100 professional artists living in 264 small and rural municipalities in Canada², which represents 17% of the 130,700 artists in Canada (Hill Strategies Research, 2006; 2001 census data). Between 1998-99 and 2000-01, the Canada Council for the Arts funded projects in 825 communities, 351 of which (43%) were in communities with less than 5,000 people (Canada Council for the Arts, 2001). In the 1996 to 2003 period, rural culture employment grew faster than total rural employment (Singh, 2006). A recent Statistics Canada analysis of culture occupations in Canada found geographic clusters in a number of rural areas (Schimpf & Sereda, 2007). Among its findings, the study revealed that "rural areas with significant culture employment tend to have very specialized culture workforces" compared to culture employment in cities, which is much more varied (p. 7).

In general, the extent of cultural/creative work occurring in rural communities tends to be undercounted and under-recognized, in part due to the traditional research focus on artists and cultural workers in urban locations where the "symbolic economy" is highly documented, as well as the more part-time nature of cultural work in rural communities (Singh, 2006) and the difficulties capturing multiple jobs in standard statistical surveys. The extent to which informal arts and touring activities are captured by existing surveys is also an issue.

General overview of the literature

Research attention to cultural development in rural communities is found within both policy and academic contexts, and encompasses a wide range of disciplines and approaches.

As reflected in this paper, there are many components to this literature, with conversations happening in many "corners." An overall, comprehensive sense of the literature is difficult to ascertain. In general, researchers are seeking to better understand the nature of culture and cultural evolution in rural areas, and the role of culture in the broader contexts and issues of rural change and adjustments.

On the public policy side, a range of research has been conducted to inform or guide policy, strategies, or investments in the arts (or culture more generally) in rural areas. According to Smiles (2006)³, key themes in this set of literature include: funding and financing the arts,

² Analysis based on Statistics Canada data. "Artists" entail (1) actors; (2) artisans and craftspersons; (3) conductors, composers and arrangers; (4) dancers; (5) musicians and singers; (6) other performers (such as circus performers and puppeteers); (7) painters, sculptors and other visual artists; (8) producers, directors, choreographers and related occupations; and (9) writers. The rural and small municipalities included here are those with fewer than 50,000 residents within 2001 municipal boundaries, with reliable data (with 40+ artists).

³ Smiles (2006) briefly analyzes the key dimensions of an international audit of research and information on opportunities for and barriers to the sustainable development of creative and/or cultural industries in rural and remote regions. This (largely English-language) literature was compiled through the International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies (IFACCA), and the majority of studies covered in this report are directed

accessing new markets for art product, partnerships to support the arts, increasing work and employment opportunities for people in rural and remote communities, and increasing cultural and social well-being and improving quality of life for regional and rural communities. Many of these reports include interesting insights on the challenges faced in rural communities and list recommendations for improving conditions and local capacity to nurture and support arts activities.

Academic research generally resides at the intersection between “a cultural turn” within rural studies⁴ and “a rural dimension” within cultural studies, both interdisciplinary fields. An emerging field of *rural cultural studies* – formed from “the intersection of cultural history and cultural geography and from new developments within adjacent interdisciplinary fields including cultural and media studies, Australian studies and environmental studies” – was profiled in a special issue of the *Australian Humanities Review* (no. 45, 2008) (Carter, Darian-Smith & Gorman-Murray, 2008, p. 27).

While acknowledging that the notion of *rural cultural studies* is “still a novelty in both cultural studies and rural studies” (p. 27), it is a necessary corrective to the research bias towards *urban* popular cultures. The new field aims to address rural issues of culture without the bias of urban standards, where rural areas are often characterized by their “lack of...” or “distance from.” It also seeks to address a traditional lack of recognition of the dynamics of culture within the research on rural communities. Overall, it argues for “the significance of the cultural dimension—and the multiple dimensions of the cultural—in understanding the key issues of demographic change, economic productivity, environmental and climatic crisis, Indigenous/non-indigenous relations and land ownership, and the role of ‘cultural’ factors in the renewal, or potential renewal, of country towns and communities” (p. 27).

Outline

This paper provides an overview of English-language academic research literature and policy-related studies with respect to cultural development in rural communities.⁵ It summarizes the dominant issues and themes in the literature, highlighting those aspects that most directly address the overall framing questions for this project:

1. What are the opportunities for and barriers to the sustainable development of creative/cultural businesses in rural regions?
2. Are there critical ingredients or common themes necessary to build long-term vitality for the arts in rural communities?
3. What ‘good practice’ projects/programs/partnerships/strategies are working in rural or remote regions?

toward informing national or regional policies for arts and cultural activities in rural and remote regions.

⁴ In *Handbook of Rural Studies*, contemporary rural research is characterized by studies of cultural representation, nature, sustainability, new economies, power, new consumerism, identity, and exclusion (Cloke, Mardsen, & Mooney, 2006). As an example, the “Negotiating the Cultural Politics and Poetics of Identity within the Creative Industries of South West Britain” research project at the University of Exeter, England, will examine how relationships between place and identity are negotiated by creators and arts organizations.

⁵ We have included a few French-language articles in the annotated bibliography for this project, and have highlighted the *Répertoire d’actions culturelles en milieu rural* developed by Les arts et la ville in the compilation of Canadian case studies that accompanies this paper. A full review of French-language literature was not possible within the current paper. We recommend a parallel review of French-language literature on the topic of rural revitalization through the arts to complement the current project.

We have attempted to portray a sense of the literature as a whole and some of the research findings, while acknowledging that a brief overview cannot do justice to the breadth and depth of the research it highlights. Thus, we see this paper as a first step illuminating some paths for further investigation.

The paper is organized into four sections:

1. **The nature of arts and cultural activity in rural communities**, which discusses four key themes in the literature: (1) the nature of arts activity in rural communities; (2) festivals as community-building practices; (3) touring activity; and (4) the role of information and computer technologies. Aboriginal/First Nations cultural practices are also noted.
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4. **Governance strategies and initiatives**, which outlines some of the reoccurring themes among policy efforts and recommendations to support and sustain rural cultural development.

These general categories were useful to organize the literature, but many works span these boundaries and reoccurring themes emerge. A set of case study examples accompanies this paper to illustrate the variety of ways arts and cultural/creative development is being pursued in the revitalization of Canadian rural communities (see also the case studies outlined in Brooks-Joiner & McKay, 2008).

1 ■ The nature of arts and cultural activity in rural communities

I have always been amused by the perception that rural and small communities have a different kind of art than metro or suburban communities. ... The arts flourish in rural and small towns in every form because of committed artists and arts activists who live there. ... In rural communities, people come together to present art for people they know and to support artists they know. ... The arts are a part of the fiber of small towns because they are part of the tradition of the community. ...

(Janet Brown, 2002)

The days when the phrase ‘rural arts’ suggested bucolic stereotypes should be long gone, but the quality and variety of the arts that thrive in the countryside are still under-appreciated.

(Arts Council England, 2005, p. 7)

The nature of arts activity in rural communities – the underlying cultural assets, dynamics, and foundations – inform and shape the nature of community and economic initiatives that interact with the arts. Literature on arts activities in rural communities tends to focus on three topics: the nature of arts activities occurring indigenously within the communities, festivals, and the impacts of touring activities. A cross-cutting theme is the issue of audiences – their composition, and how to increase and diversify them – for both indigenous and touring activities (Smiles, 2006; e.g., Hamilton & Scullion, 2004; Andersen, 2005; Scollen, 2007).⁶ The role of information and computer technologies (especially broadband) in creation, connection, and developing new audiences and markets is also a cross-cutting theme.

The particular circumstances of cultural activity and cultural development of Aboriginal or First Nations communities is also a key theme in the literature, especially in Australia and Canada. In Canada, the combination of (a) community and more macro initiatives building community self-identity and strength through cultural pride and vibrancy and (b) the growth of aboriginal cultural tourism strategies and initiatives make this an area of growing importance for these communities and for future cooperation and collaboration among First Nations and non-First Nations communities. Literature on First Nations and Aboriginal culture addresses, in part, questions relating to: encouraging and supporting Aboriginal cultural traditions and their evolution; appropriately relating Aboriginal cultural practices to other arts and culture traditions; and developing appropriate means and mechanisms of sharing Aboriginal culture with broader audiences. The breadth and depth of this area was beyond what was possible to address in this paper. We highlight the topic here to recommend fuller consideration and review.

1.1. The nature of arts activity in rural communities

Literature on the nature of arts activities indigenously occurring in rural communities can be roughly organized into two categories: (1) the nature and power of rural arts activities and (2) issues of content, including (a) imported vs. local stories and (b) creation for self vs. creating products for tourist markets. (Research focusing on the “creative sector” or on creative businesses is discussed within Section 3.)

No comprehensive chart of cultural activity types was located in this review, but based on reading the literature it is clear that arts activities in rural communities encompass many dimensions and features. These characteristics generally exist as degrees of difference rather than black-and-white clear divisions. A general, preliminary listing of some of these characteristics is presented in Table 1 to highlight the inherent complexity in discussions of arts activities.

⁶ Much of this research involves audience profile studies for particular geographic regions and locales, so it is not reviewed here.

Table 1. Complexities of the arts: A preliminary compilation of dimensions and characteristics of arts activities in rural communities

Who	Locally based	Locally based + Visiting Combined			Visiting
		Amateur / "general community," Semi-professional, <u>and</u> Professional	Professional + Professional	Professional(s) + General community	
Nature of activities	What	Informal <u>and</u> Formal activities	Artist residency	Site-specific collaboration	Visit with community engagement (could be artist residency with community)
	New or existing	New creation <u>and</u> Presentation of existing work / traditions	New creation, possible mentorship, co-learning		Tour "stop-over"
Main audience**	Participatory or solo	Participatory <u>and</u> Solo	Participatory <u>and</u> Solo	Participatory	Presentation of existing work / Traditions
		Local <u>and</u> Visitors (tourists) / Export	Export	Local* <u>and</u> Visitors (tourists)	Generally non-participatory
Children, Youth, Adult, <u>and</u> Seniors					
Timing	Seasonal <u>and</u> Year-round	Seasonal <u>and</u> Year-round	Seasonal <u>and</u> Year-round	Sporadic	Regular <u>and</u> Sporadic
	Singular <u>and</u> Mixed				
Cultural references and characteristics	Mainstream <u>and</u> Avant-garde				
	Commercial <u>and</u> Experimental / Art for art's sake	Commercial <u>and</u> Experimental / Art for art's sake*	Commercial* <u>and</u> Experimental / Art for art's sake		

* Bold – characteristic tends to be weighted here

** Many other audience composition categories could be added.

Discussions of arts activity in rural areas generally focus on *rural arts* activities. Gard Ewell (2006) describes rural arts activity as holistic, drawing in people from many walks of life, and stresses that it is not simply a small-scale version of urban arts programs. In a Canadian Cultural Observatory workshop on arts and heritage in rural communities, Brotman (2007) observed:

... rural arts are different from urban arts, but in unexpected ways. We often are predisposed to think that rural arts are smaller-scale versions of arts activities in larger towns and cities, or that they are in some sense not professional in a mainstream sense. But in fact rural arts have a richness and complexity congruent with anything seen in larger centres, and have distinct characteristics that arise precisely because these activities happen in particular rural or community settings.

Brooks-Joiner & McKay (2008) observed that the engagement of citizens in rural and remote communities differs from that in larger centres. While professional artists and cultural workers played a role in the communities surveyed, the “backbone of cultural capacity” in all the communities was “volunteer initiative and community participation” (p. 5). As well, the “divide between amateur and professional artists” was not perceived to be as deep as in urban centres (p. 5).

Rural art is associated with capacity building, empowerment, collaboration, expanded networking opportunities, and individual and community transformation. The most successful community arts projects in rural settings enable the community to feel they are acquiring skill even as they are “building social structures where they could give expression to their emotional and spiritual lives” (Brotman, cited by Canadian Cultural Observatory, 2007).

A growing interest in *participatory arts*, roughly defined as the synthesis of *community art* and *professional art*, furthers the transformative potential of this activity. This is equivalent to the *artists and community collaboration* arts process, defined by the Canada Council for the Arts as “an arts process that actively involves the work of professional artists and non-arts community members in creative and collaborative relationships,” which may include projects that include youth and arts education (McGauley, 2006, p. 4).⁷

Littoral Arts Trust in England has outlined the preliminary contours of what it describes as an emergent “New Rural Arts” tradition that includes: “arts-led urban/rural cultural diversity and creative business partnerships; arts support for the work of rural health care agencies and rural health initiatives; creative work with rural children and young people; promoting wider access to the arts for people with disabilities, and for women and rural elders” (Hunter, 2006, p. 2). Other potential areas include digital rural arts and new media, and development of creative rural industries (see Hunter, 2003-05).

The importance of nourishing local culture by injecting outside influences, such as the presence of local or outside professional artists, into local community work is highlighted (Brotman, 2007; Nolte, 2007). Both arts professionals and volunteers in rural communities feel distant from the centres of the cultural world and the injections of outside influences “go a long way in addressing [this] loneliness” (Brotman, 2007). For visiting artists, their expectations are challenged by “the uniqueness of each region’s individual members, its

⁷ A good overview of current thinking about these practices is found in McGauley (2006).

cultural, social, economic and political ecologies,” and the interactive experience that can rebuild the trust lost through the professional artist experience (Nolte, 2007, p. 3).

Two **content-related issues** emerge from the broader literature on the arts in small and rural communities, relating to what local producers choose to create and produce, and the need to balance the impetus for “original” with audience receptivity, demand, and economic survival:

Imported plays / local stories. Current research by James Hoffman at Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops, BC, is exploring the relationship between professional theatre companies in small cities in British Columbia and their communities, exploring such questions as the responsibilities of professional theatres toward their communities, the nature and understanding of “community-engagement,” and the impact and expectations of local audiences. Professional theatre companies may traditionally view their role as importing-through-producing the hot new plays from urban centres, thus bringing the “best” to their community. But when a small city-based professional theatre is “the only game in town,” what is its responsibility towards telling local stories and engaging local issues versus being conduits for imported materials from outside (urban) centres?

Local creation for whom? Although not exclusive to rural communities, an issue that is intertwined with the rising prominence of cultural tourism (see Section 3) is the question of the creation of work for tourist markets versus “art for art’s sake” creation. In a series of interviews in Prince Edward County, Ontario, Hracs (2005) explains that the commercialization of the arts leads to artists who alternate between making art for tourists and art for themselves. Similarly, through interviews in Parry Sound, Ontario, Mitchell et al. (2004) explore the attitudes of artists toward producing visual art for a tourism market that is looking primarily for local landscapes and seascapes.⁸ The propensity to just produce art for tourists, however, is a divisive issue within the arts community with some artists believing that “the production of art for art’s sake is being eroded by solely commercial artists” (Hracs, 2005, p. 70; see also Mitchell et al., 2004).

1.2. Festivals as community-building practices

Rural festivals generally have their roots in harvests, equinoxes, and feasts, and are very linked to the rural experience. Rural festivals encompass a variety of cultural practices and activities, and can characterize and enhance a broadly defined cultural expression of place. As events in which “rural identities are reproduced and maintained” (Gibson & Walmsley, 2007, p. 14), festivals can serve as a means of fostering collective identity and a sense of belonging (Gorman-Murray, Waitt & Gibson, 2008). Over the past decade or so, “tourism, festivals, and similar cultural events have become an economic mainstay of many country towns, particularly in the context of changing demographics and industries” (Gorman-Murray, Waitt & Gibson, 2008, p. 176). The role of festivals in rural cultural revitalization – and the social and economic aspects of this process – is the subject of extensive research in Australia.⁹

⁸ An artist quoted in the article explains: “I paint landscapes up here because I show every week in Parry Sound down at the Docks... If you want to live from the art that you produce, you obviously want to have a market... even if I like to paint abstract, if I want to sell here in Parry Sound to tourists that come here, I basically have to paint some local scenery, some local landscapes or seascapes, otherwise you don’t sell it” (Mitchell et al., 2004, p. 159).

⁹ A three-year Australian Research Council Festivals Project, entitled “Reinventing Rural Places: The Extent and Impact of Rural Festivals in Australia,” sought to document the extent and significance of festivals for rural

Increasingly, festivals are growing beyond their grassroots beginnings and used for purposes such as economic development and place-branding as well. As the festivals' success enables organizational duties to be shifted away from local volunteers, some of the traditional social benefits of festivals on the local community, such as community engagement and skill development, are threatened (Davies, 2007).¹⁰ State sponsorship and funding, as well as the involvement of professional organizations, encourages this development cycle and may add commercial overtones and values to the festivals (Connell & Waite, 2007).

In Australia, *thematic* rural festivals are explicitly being used as a tool in revitalization (Davies, 2007). Compared to traditional rural festivals, which typically centred on agricultural fairs, these “new” festivals have a greater focus on economic impact, sponsorship, and drawing from a larger geographic catchment area (Davies, 2007). Such festivals can create an “assumed identity” for a community if they have no organic link to the identity of the place (Brennan-Horley, Connell & Gibson, 2007). Festivals with no such link are often tourism products, and if successful, can help in revitalization and the creation of new local identities. With over 2,800 festivals occurring in rural Australia¹¹, the use of a “kitsch” theme such as Elvis (see Brennan-Horley, Connell & Gibson, 2007) helps set one regional festival/parade apart from others.

Surprisingly, another study found that Australian regional festivals, though funded by local councils, were rarely formally included in local economic development strategies. Gibson & Walmsley (2007) believe that such a contradiction between local significance and “policy invisibility” illustrates why many regional festivals are not understood or appreciated by planning professions.

1.3. Touring activity

Touring offers access to high-quality professional productions, extends the range of work available in rural communities, and provides meaningful experiences for both presenters and audiences:

Rural touring is not a poor substitute for the kind of experience offered by urban arts venues. It is qualitatively different in several respects. The facilities may not be as good, but the intimacy of the space, the opportunity to meet the performers, the fact that most of the audience know each other – these give a village hall show a unique power. Indeed, they can make it a more challenging experience for the audience, who often come for reasons unconnected with an interest in the arts, and for the performers, who cannot expect people to be familiar with their work. Both artists and audiences consistently feel that such shows are exciting, memorable and have a quality which is distinctively valuable. (Matarasso et al., 2004, p. 7)

communities and economies. This project sought to track how widespread the phenomenon of cultural and community festivals was in rural Australia, and how this contributed to the reorientation of rural economies and communities towards a “post-productivist” future (beyond agriculture). In 2007, the ARC Cultural Research Network hosted a colloquium on “Festival Places: Revitalising Rural Australia” featuring 21 presentations on the role of festivals in rural cultural revitalization, which will be published into a book (in process).

¹⁰ An alternate perspective on this shift from grassroots to staff might see local skill development continuing in a more stable manner. However, the nature of grassroots engagement would be qualitatively changed.

¹¹ Over 2,800 festivals are included in the Reinventing Rural Places database of festivals in rural Australia.

Much of the touring-related literature examines the impacts of touring activities (e.g., Matarasso et al., 2004; Hamilton & Scullion, 2004) or evaluates a touring program and outlines advice for successful rural touring practices (e.g., O’Leary, 2006). Reports from funders tend to emphasize the importance of touring activities to broaden access to and develop new audiences for high quality, professional arts and cultural projects in rural areas (e.g., Canada Council for the Arts, 2001, 2008; Hunter, 2006).

In a large-scale study of rural touring in England and Wales, François Matarasso et al. (2004) discusses how “touring schemes” have a distinctive place within the rural arts ecosystem, in part because of their valuable partnerships with local promoters.¹² He observed “an evident growth in rural arts activity, particularly in the kind of self-directed initiatives that link communities with professional artists,” and views rural touring as part of this development (p. 5). The research found that “rural touring could influence community cohesion, providing a common, comfortable space for members of rural communities to meet and talk. Rural touring was found to significantly impact community development in rural areas as the tours have provided an avenue for communities to develop new community projects and organisations. A number of challenges for rural touring were [also] identified in the research, including volunteering and finance” (cited in Smiles, 2006, p. 13).

Although most literature on the impacts of touring activity tends to focus on the community, some research also examines the impacts of touring on those “on the road.” For example, the Rural Virtues research project explored the extent and role of professional arts touring in rural areas in Scotland (Hamilton & Scullion, 2004). The study consisted of three parts: (1) an historical review of four or five companies and the experience of rural touring by company members, (2) a policy and funding framework study examining the attitudes and policies of the associated agencies to account for the range of provider-institutions, and (3) case studies, undertaken in Dumfries and Galloway, assessing the impact of rural arts touring on the communities. Among its findings, the report critiqued “the challenge of rural-based agents contributing [to] the cultural diet through the development of indigenous and locally-based talent.”¹³

O’Leary (2006) stresses the importance of empowering local communities to take control of their own cultural environment, which in Ireland was facilitated through the creation and support of local arts networks in such areas. Regional Arts Australia (2005a) also stresses the importance of local involvement and control in regards to touring activities. The agency found that while imported arts experiences were valued in the rural regions, it was “strongly felt that imported program should be generated from the community rather than ‘managed in’” (p. 12).

1.4. The role of information and computer technologies

The capacities, potential, and impacts of information and computer technologies – and broadband access in particular – are reoccurring themes throughout the literature on rural communities. Traditionally, there has not been a significant focus in this literature on how

¹² The report notes that touring schemes, connecting voluntary promoters with professional performers, have been active in rural Britain for almost 25 years. In 2003, there were at least 40 touring schemes active in England and Wales.

¹³ Report description on IFACCA website: <http://www.ifacca.org/publications/2004/01/01/the-same-but-different-rural-arts/>

this might affect cultural production or the development of new audiences.¹⁴ However, three trends are now directing attention to the cultural and creative aspects of these technologies: (1) the growing desire to attract “creative class” workers to communities of all sizes, (2) the prevalence and mainstreaming of internet-based creation and information sharing practices, especially among youth, in which internet functionality takes on a much more social dimension than in the past, and (3) the mainstreaming of the internet as a marketing tool, for accessing and expanding audiences and markets for art product and related services (discussed further in Section 3).

The desire of communities to **attract “creative class” workers** is placing increased emphasis on the importance of broadband technology, which enables telecommuting and offers workers the possibility of relocating to rural areas while retaining their established livelihood. It has also meant that creative work is now beginning to enter the “economic development” picture. For example, Donald (2008) states that broadband internet access is one of the important foundations for attracting creative industries to Prince Edward County, Ontario, and the lack of access to broadband is a “significant barrier to creativity (and the marketing/promotion of creativity)” and an “impediment to fully realize the creative potential of PEC’s economy” (p. 24).

Similar statements are found in the UK: the *East Midlands Rural Creative Industries Regional Report* concluded that “broadband and new technologies provide a critical ‘kick-start’ for new businesses and offer measurable growth in the more mature; it was described as crucial to all the businesses and support agencies interviewed. Where broadband is still not available it is a great limitation on efficiency” (Burns & Kirkpatrick, 2008b, p. 30). In this region, a significant portion of creative businesses were “able to work virtually anywhere with good internet access” and with this need met, found “the attraction of lower costs and rural quality of life” to be significant (p. 43). The study also found growing evidence of e-businesses that market through direct mail to client databases.

This economic development perspective has been (informally) linked to broader community development considerations: many former urban dwellers become involved in entrepreneurial activities in their new rural areas (Labrianidis, 2004), and many of the new cultural workers settling in rural communities tend to be active citizens and are often the leaders of new cultural productions and community initiatives (Jones, 2004; Cuesta, Gillespie, & Lillis, 2005).

Within creation processes, information and computer technologies are increasingly incorporated as a **tool in creation** and in linking cultural producers with each other and enabling **co-creation**. The ubiquitous and immediate circulation of both global and local content via the internet is changing the nature of artistic inspiration, exposure, and reach. It also can change one’s sense of location from “isolated” to an interactive node in these networks of connectivity.

¹⁴ The general approach is reflected, for example, in *Rural Communities as the Cornerstone*, where the potential of broadband is described in terms of core functionalities without reference to uses such as cultural and creative development or enhancing community identity and promotion: “Broadband plays an important role in rural, remote and northern communities in terms of their connectivity to the global exchange of information and their ability to compete in the increasing global marketplace. Furthermore, broadband access is also seen as a critical infrastructure requirement for rural communities in terms of their long-term sustainability and viability, their access to services such as banking, health care and distance education, and their ability to build networks and connections among communities” (Canadian Rural Partnership, 2003, p. 4).

With the rapid evolution of the content-sharing and co-creating capacities of internet-based resource sites in recent years, the socio-cultural aspects of internet-based communication and content sharing are now *as important as* the more administrative functionalities of the technologies. In both cases, the key is now **connection** – from a socio-cultural perspective, as a tool to help overcome feelings of isolation; and from the perspective of economic/business/administrative functional abilities, as tools that enable economic development and reinvention.

Bowles (2008) describes the important role these technologies play in rural lifestyles, characterized as a form of support system in revitalized rural lifestyles:

Young media users in country towns are now part of national and global social networks, rather than confined to the subcultures that happen to exist in town; previously isolated rural parents can seek advice and community over the internet; and traditional business owners or even self-employed tree-changing¹⁵ cultural workers are able to meet their clients and pay their bills flexibly from a wider range of different locations. (p. 94)

2. The community context for the arts development and vitality

The arts have always been the glue which holds rural communities together. From the amateur operatics rehearsals on a Thursday night to the professional touring companies like Wales' Theatr Bara Caws, who work with volunteers to bring their performances to village halls, they are part of the fabric of rural society. But it is not just entertainment which they have to offer, and without their serious benefits country living would be a much poorer, less happy and more isolated experience.

(Voluntary Arts Network, 2006, p. 2)

One of the resounding themes of this report is the close connection between the arts—in a variety of forms—and community vitality. An increase in arts activity can draw new residents and businesses, boost civic participation, develop new social gathering places, and build bridges across ethnic and class divides—all of which strengthens communities. The arts can profoundly affect the ability of a town not only to survive over time but to thrive. ... [However,] to make any progress, revitalization ideas can't just originate with or benefit artists.

(Cuesta, Carlo and Associates, 2005, Forward, p. 70)

¹⁵ In Australia, most urban–rural migration has been characterized as *sea-change*. Recently, its inland version has become known as *tree-change*: “Such terms invoke images of mainly retired or semi-retired households moving to pleasant coastal and inland areas for lifestyle reasons, and labelled elsewhere as counter-urbanisation or rural gentrification” (*Australia Humanities Review*, 2008, p. 55).

The impacts of arts activities on community vitality, on direct participants, and on passive participants are documented in several studies. For example, Guetzkow (2002) reviews several studies with the aim of illustrating how community revitalization is encouraged through organized participatory activity (see Table 2); *Use or Ornament?* documents a wide variety of returns from direct participation in arts activities (Matarasso, 1997); and a literature review conducted as part of the Shifferd (2005) study provided “good empirical evidence that the presence of artists, informal arts activity, and arts organizations in a community contributes in many ways to the quality of community life” and confirmed that “creative activity extends far beyond the formally organized arts” (p. 6).

As rural communities decide to pursue arts-based or arts-infused development or revitalization paths, how can the research literature inform these decisions and strategies? How can cultural assets be enhanced and used to optimal benefit? What are the evolutionary steps involved in such situations? What choices will be involved? Three themes are most relevant in this context: (1) critical ingredients for building arts-active communities, (2) the potential for creative destruction, and (3) community reinvention using the arts.

2.1. Critical ingredients for building arts-active communities

Are there critical ingredients or common themes necessary to build long-term vitality for the arts in rural and “suburban fringe” communities? In late 2004, the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council commissioned a study of ten small Minnesota communities in order to explore and answer this question. The study was grounded in a review of the literature and the development of a logic model derived from the field of arts-based community development.

The study’s literature review revealed that little or no published material dealt directly with the focus of the study, specifically: Under what conditions does a thriving and sustainable arts sector develop in small communities in rural and suburban fringe areas? And, what are the processes of artistic development in such communities? (Shifferd, 2005). Consequently, through their study, Shifferd (2005) and Rodning Bash (2006) develop or identify:

1. A three-stage rural community development conceptual model;
2. Environmental factors supportive of cultural development, in communities with an *emerging* arts presence;
3. Characteristics/features of arts-active communities (those achieving the stage of *sustained development*); and
4. Key ingredients for growing an arts-active community.

Shifferd (2005) views community cultural ecologies as a continuum – “from nascent, isolated and episodic, to highly integrated and sustained, involving significant numbers of people” (p. 8). The context of creative activity ranges from the “personal and informal” to the “organized and institutionalized,” with all considered part of a healthy community cultural environment and thus of equal importance to the study.

Table 2. How the arts impact communities

	Individual			Community		
	Material / Health	Cognitive / Psych.	Interpersonal	Economic	Cultural	Social
Direct involvement	Builds inter-personal ties and promotes volunteering, which improves health Increases opportunities for self-expression and enjoyment Reduces delinquency in high-risk youth	Increases sense of individual efficacy and self-esteem Improves individuals' sense of belonging or attachment to a community Improves human capital: skills and creative abilities	Builds individual social networks Enhances ability to work with others and communicate ideas	Wages to paid employees	Increases sense of collective identity and efficacy	Builds social capital by getting people involved, by connecting organizations to each other, and by giving participants experience in organizing and working with local government and nonprofits
Audience participation	Increases opportunities for enjoyment Relieves stress	Increases cultural capital Enhances visuo-spatial reasoning (Mozart effect) Improves school performance	Increases tolerance of others	People (esp. tourists/visitors) spend money on attending the arts and on local businesses. Further, local spending by these arts venues and patronized businesses has indirect multiplier effects	Builds community identity and pride Leads to positive community norms, such as diversity, tolerance and free expression	People come together who might not otherwise come into contact with each other
Presence of artists and arts organization & institutions	Increases individual opportunity and propensity to be involved in the arts			Increases propensity of community members to participate in the arts Increases attractiveness of area to tourists, businesses, people (esp. high-skill workers) and investments Fosters a "creative milieu" that spurs economic growth in creative industries Greater likelihood of revitalization	Improves community image and status	Promotes neighborhood cultural diversity Reduces neighborhood crime and delinquency

This grid further develops a typology proposed by Kevin McCarthy (2002).
Source: Guetzkow (2002)

Along this continuum, three levels of artistic development are identified: emerging, sustaining, and mature (see Table 3). *Emerging development* is characterized by the emergence of a leadership group (i.e., leadership coalescence) and the existence of a variety of informal, shared arts activities that people can participate in. *Sustaining development* features broadening networking and collaboration, regular arts activity in multiple disciplines, civic engagement, a “critical mass” of artists, and an established arts advocacy group. *Mature development* is defined by the arts being central to community development, organizational infrastructure, one or more facilities, and artists and arts-related businesses in place. A special case of mature development is the arts destination community (Rodning Bash, 2006).

Between these stages, the model also shows the aspects of the larger community necessary to “increasingly integrate the arts into the broader structures of town life,” such as baseline attitudes and values which seem to be necessary to provide “a fertile field for artistic development” (p. 9). The model is presented as a logic model offering a context for understanding a process, not a causal model of cultural development.

In **communities with an *emerging* arts presence** (i.e., the *more active* communities), four foundational environmental factors were found to be supportive of cultural development. These communities:

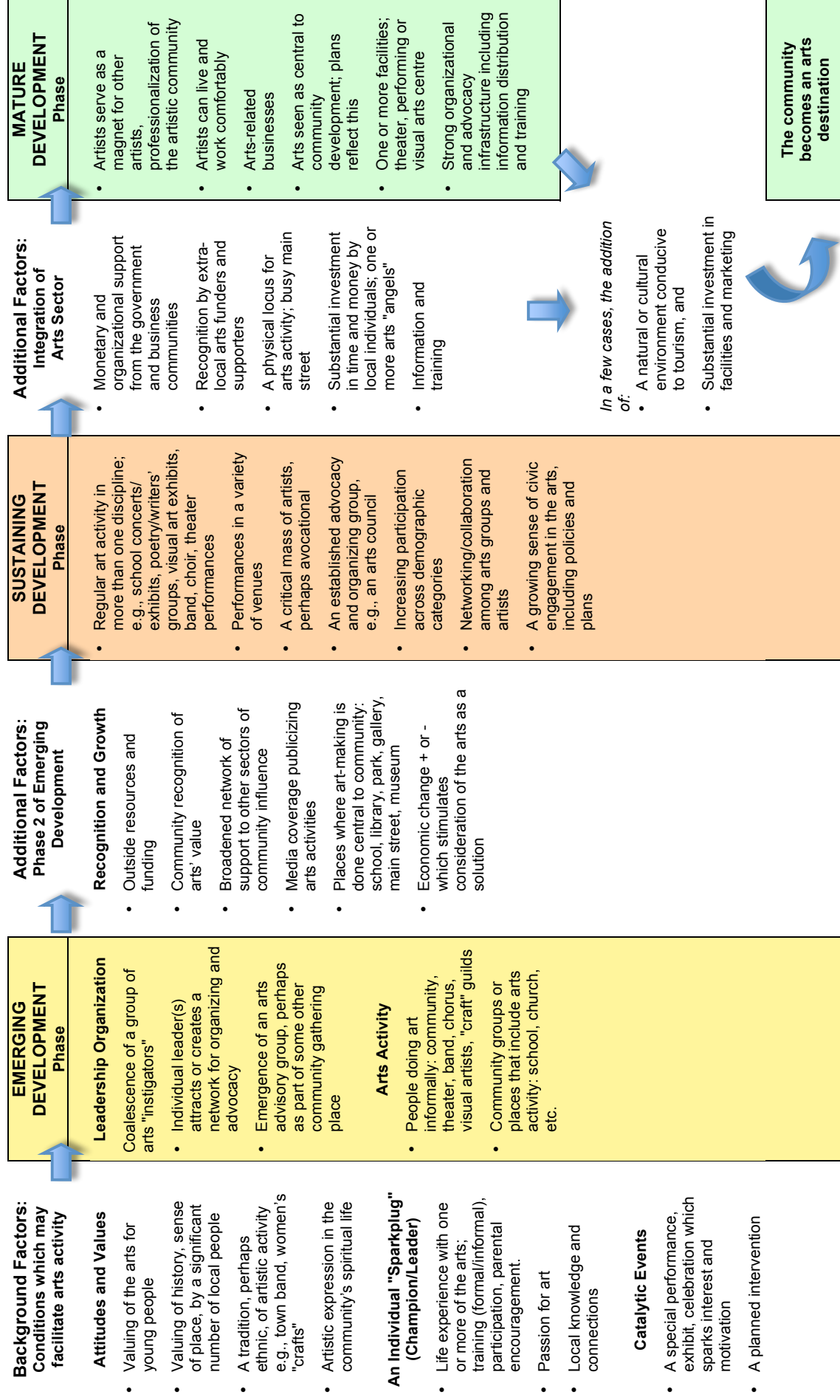
- a. Are distinguished by a greater value placed on history and sense of place. ...
- b. Exhibit ecumenicism among the faith communities and some openness to cultural diversity [a provisional finding]. ...
- c. Have a variety of informal arts activities in various venues; emphasize participatory projects.
- d. Have leadership capable of organizing a group of arts supporters. (Shifferd, p. 37)

The **arts-active communities** (those achieving the stage of *sustained development*) were geographically defined localities in which “a significant percentage of the residents engage in creative activity as audience members, learners, mentors, or creators, *and* these creative endeavours regularly result in social interaction, *and* arts and culture activity is broadly recognized as an important contributor to community cohesion and social capital” (Shifferd, 2005, p. 8, emphasis added).

In general, the most arts-active communities have the following features or characteristics:

1. Leaders/supporters are connected into larger community networks;
 2. A critical mass of leadership/support exists, not just one or two individuals;
 3. Leaders establish coalitions with other community groups;
 4. An established group for arts advocacy and planning exists and gives voice;
 5. The arts are seen by key non-arts leaders as essential to community well-being;
 6. Arts activity and participation is intentionally inclusive: of all ages and social groups;
 7. Key community festivals include arts activities;
 8. All forms of creative expression are honored, both formal and informal;
 9. Participation is encouraged;
 10. A minority of these communities sees the arts also as an amenity to attract visitors.
- (Rodning Bash, 2006, p. 13)

Table 3. Logic model: What makes the arts thrive in (rural/small) towns? Hypothesized connections



Source: Shifferd (2005). Slightly adapted for this paper.

Synthesizing the findings from the Minnesota communities, Rodning Bash (2006) identified **five key ingredients to growing an arts-active community**. These points are also reflected in other literature, as noted here.

1. Underlying social context: Attitudes and values that are grounded in acceptance of differences, in a welcoming openness, and a grounded pride of place

Brown (2002) argues that the vitality of the arts in small rural towns is fueled by the “authentic passion” of local artists and art lovers, with the challenge residing in finding sufficient human resources to keep activities going. Shifferd (2005) confirms these observations, stating: “the experience of arts participation in small towns stems from and reinforces people’s commitment to the value of creativity and the challenge of creating something of beauty” (p. 39).

Similarly, local (internal) investment and support of local small businesses was essential in the rural East Midlands. Burns & Kirkpatrick (2008b) highlighted the need to commit to locally based creative innovation through *import substitution*, where locally created products take the place of those that would be bought through travel to outside cities and towns. This pride of place – and the businesses of that place – strengthens the success rate of small businesses and other organizations.

2. Informal arts: A valuing of arts in everyday life

Work that validates and builds upon the informal arts will expand the base of participation in the arts. In addition, a special arts event can provide the stimulus for further innovation and development in the sector (Rodning Bash, 2006). In this context, well-structured, planned “interventions by funders” can be extremely important sources of encouragement for local arts groups and supporters (p. 17).

3. Leadership with a broad vision for cultural development and an empowering, facilitative style

The Shifferd (2005) study found a number of features of arts leadership important to cultural development:

- a. Leaders must be able to attract a group, a critical mass, of supporters to share the work of programming and advocacy. Leaders need to be connected into the larger structures of community influence. In this study, the most effective leaders were long-time and respected residents of their towns. But it is certainly possible for people to learn how to establish the connections needed for effective leadership. And it is just as certainly not necessary for effective arts leaders to be “life-long” community residents.
- b. The leadership group needs to establish coalitions or collaborations with other civic entities to assure that the arts sector is well integrated into larger community development plans and projects (Rodning Bash, 2006, p. 19).

4. Social networks: Integration into the larger structures of community life

Different community members will value the arts for different reasons, both extrinsic (i.e., the arts provide an amenity for visitors and thus contribute to the economic

vitality of the town) and intrinsic (i.e., “for the enjoyment and broadening of experience that the arts provide to individuals, and for the enhancement of the overall quality of life”) as well as the benefits the arts provide in bringing people together and providing experiences to enhance a sense of belonging and place, to strengthen social cohesion, to bridge differences, and to “encourage reconciliation in instances of conflict” (Rodning Bash, 2006, p. 20). Collaborations and partnerships are important to the development of the arts ecosystem within the community; skills development for working in partnership can be supported.

5. Support to infrastructure development

Infrastructure includes creative places and spaces as well as organizational infrastructure such as not-for-profit organizations and social networks; schools, especially extracurricular programming; and support from the municipality, commercial entities, and other funders. Rodning Bash (2006) highlights the creation of a formal community cultural advocating/coordinating body as particularly important for the communities in the Minnesota study. Likewise, Burns & Kirkpatrick (2008b) calls for the “development of stronger networks for creative sectors” and “better coordination of public sector agencies in support of rural creative industries” (p. 33). The East Midland study also calls for “better linkages between creative industries and cultural, tourism and heritage sectors, and placemaking agendas” as well as “better linkages with and coordination with skills development in general and further and higher education in particular” (p. 33).

Overall, the literature emphasizes the importance of broad support of arts-based community initiatives, which is seen as critical to success and to maximizing benefits. This is emphasized in a wide variety of reports and studies, including the three Minnesota studies (Cuesta, Carlo and Associates, 2005; Shifferd, 2005; Rodning Bash, 2006), the multi-year Littoral Arts Trust rural arts strategy in England (2001-02; Hunter, 2003-05, 2006, and 2008), and Canadian work in Prince Edward County, Ontario (e.g., Baeker, 2008; Donald, 2008).

2.2. The potential for creative destruction

While Shifferd (2005) and Rodning Bash (2006) complete their model with the potential for some arts-active communities to become an “arts destination” and major tourism attractor, Kebir & Crevoisier (2008), Mitchell (1998), and Mitchell & de Waal (2008) consider some of the more negative aspects that can occur as a community’s culture and heritage become over-commodified and are impacted by their own success, leading to “creative destruction.” The two sets of literature thus serve as useful counterpoints to one another, and a continuance of potential development arcs.

Kebir & Crevoisier (2008) explain that while community legacies, heritage, and contemporary culture can become significant economic resources, the commodification of certain components within the culture can turn a community into “a folkloric spectacle: a transformation into a type of Disneyland or a living museum” (p. 67). If these latter forces are predominant, the community “loses its own dynamic and falls apart” (p. 67). However, the authors are optimistic that “certain dynamic communities will also find the strength to take advantage of their cultural resources and to continually reinvent new ones, while preserving their revenues and their specificity” (p. 68).

Mitchell (1998)'s model of *creative destruction* describes an arc of community development based on the relationship among three variables: entrepreneurial investment, consumption of commodified heritage, and destruction of the rural idyll. Based on the “test site” of St. Jacobs, Ontario, Mitchell points out how creative destruction can occur when symbols of a region's heritage are reproduced as commodities in rural revitalization and tourism strategies (see also Mitchell & Coghill, 2000, which examined the village of Elora, Ontario). While this can lead to increased capital in communities, it can also contribute to the destruction of the very image of rural heritage it reproduces. For example, the commodification of the rural idyll leads to the replacement of the original by shopping malls and staged heritage – what is termed *aestheticized consumption*.

Ten years later, Mitchell & de Waal (2008) revisited the area and found that the creative destruction had continued, and the evolutionary path taken was assessed in light of recent critical literature on the transformation of rural space. The authors concluded that “to fully understand the transformative process, one must integrate the demands of myriad sub-cultures, whose social relations, ideologies and actions will contribute to the development of a contested landscape of consumption” (p. 156). They consequently made additions and modifications to the original conceptual model, including the evolution of “heritage-scape” (e.g., heritage-themed shopping malls) to “leisure-scape,” a landscape focused on revenue generation without a necessary link to heritage. Table 4 illustrates the process of creative destruction outlined in the 2008 article.

2.3. Community reinvention using the arts, or attracting “artistic counter-urbanism”

Community revitalization and “reinvention” are generally rooted in two interconnected situations. First, the issue of maintaining or growing a community's population, through retaining current residents and/or attracting new ones, which underlies the vitality or even continuance of many communities. Second, changing economic foundations whereby the traditional (economic) role of a rural community is no longer viable or sufficient, and communities seek to remake and reposition themselves for contemporary needs and functions. The reinvention of communities to attract new residents and businesses is linked to patterns of counter-urbanization population flows and rural gentrification, as well as the attraction of immigrants to rural communities.

Many examples have been documented, although critical perspectives on these efforts are rare. The Town of Chemainus on Vancouver Island is a classic example of a reinvention, necessitated when the local mill closed in the early 1980s, which embraced tourism through using the arts as a regenerative tool. Known mainly for its array of outdoor murals, it also features theatre, fine crafts, and other arts activities. In Ontario, Prince Edward County's conscious promotion to attract retirement- and near-retirement-aged new residents (Donald, 2008) and its planning efforts towards a “rural creative economy” is another example of a community rebranding, repositioning, and recreating itself.

Other communities have evolved in a more organic fashion to embrace the arts. For example, the Town of Annapolis Royal, Nova Scotia, rooted in significant historical assets, is also home to a large number of artists and now promotes itself as a “magnet for visual artists, craftspeople, performers and writers” (Brooks-Joiner & McKay, 2008, p. 34). While a strong focus on tourism is evident in the town, gradually the broader social and economic contributions of the arts are also being recognized.

Table 4. The revised six-stage model of creative destruction

Stage	Activities of drivers: profiteers, preservationists and promoters	Consumers (hosts and guest)	Attitudes towards tourism	Dominant landscape
Pre-commodification	Inactive	Few	Largely positive	Productivist
Early commodification	Private-sector investment in commodification may be initiated. Preservationist activity may be initiated. Policy promoting development may be implemented.	Some heritage-seekers	Some awareness of negative implications amongst ruralites	
Advanced commodification	Active private-sector investment in commodification. Preservations may be active; some may oppose non-heritage-type investments. Public sector policy/action promoting development may be implemented or continue.	Growing numbers of heritage-seekers	Increasing awareness of negative implications amongst ruralites	Post-productivist Heritage-scape ¹⁶
Early destruction	Very active private-sector investment. Some will deviate from the heritage theme. Preservationists may actively oppose non-heritage investments (often unsuccessfully). Public sector policy/action promoting development may be implemented or continue.	Heritage-seekers accompanied by post-tourists	Much awareness of negative implications amongst ruralites	
Advanced destruction	Scale of private-sector investment increases (e.g. hotel), with much deviation from the heritage theme. Preservationists may actively oppose non-heritage investments (often unsuccessfully). Pro-development policies/actions may be implemented or continue.	Post-tourists are in the majority.	The majority of ruralites offer negative comment; an out-migration of this cohort may occur.	
Post-destruction	Non-heritage, private-sector investments dominate. Preservationist activity may be diminished. Pro-development policies may be in place.	Numbers of heritage-seekers is very low.	The overall attitude in the community should be positive, as fewer ruralites remain. Those ruralites who choose to remain will either maintain their negative attitude, or express one of resignation.	Neo-productivist leisure-scape ¹⁷

Source: Mitchell & de Waal, 2008

¹⁶ Heritage-scape is defined as a "heritage shopping village" (p.163). The transformation from a productivist to post-productivist state is defined as a "transformation from a countryside designed to produce a limited array of commodities for economic gain, to one whose functionality is derived largely from a discourse of preservation, rather than excess profit." (p. 165)

¹⁷ Neo-productivist is defined as "a particular type of post-industrial landscape of accumulation; one that reflects the multi-functionality of rural space, but one that is driven largely by profit (and, in some cases, promotion), rather than preservation." (p.165)

In Minnesota, many rural communities are reinventing themselves to cope with economic challenges and declining populations, and for many towns the tools of reinvention are the arts and artists (Cuesta, Gillespie & Lillis, 2005). *Bright Stars: Charting the Impact of the Arts in Rural Minnesota* found that the arts act as “invaluable communication tools, economic drivers, and vital cultural links with the rest of Minnesota, the nation, and the world”; that they are playing a critical role in “maintaining the traditional vitality of rural Minnesota”; and that “the growth of arts programs can actually make the difference between a small town surviving or thriving” (Smiles, 2006, p. 7). The citizens of these communities “know that Montevideo and western Minnesota need help—and they believe that local artists and the art they create can help shape a distinctive identity for the area” (Cuesta, Gillespie & Lillis, 2005, p. 45).

The flipside of community reinvention to attract migrants is **the motivation of the migrants** to settle in rural communities. Australian research on *counter-urbanisation* – an umbrella term generally defined as “a relatively wealthy middle-class group withdrawing from urban settings to pursue a different lifestyle in a rural location” (McManus & Connell, 2008, p. 54) – focuses on the one-way migration of urban to rural due to housing costs, quality of life concerns, and retirement and starting families situations. The literature looks at the attractions to city-dwellers looking to move to a rural location, such as a pleasant lifestyle still offering many of the amenities of the city, including cultural events (and health care¹⁸).

Bunting & Mitchell (2001) suggest five key factors that may be responsible for the strong presence of performing, visual and literary artists within some Canadian towns and villages: urban (market) access; landscape appeal; economic exigency (local sources of employment); the presence of aboriginal culture (i.e., the presence of a traditional culture also may produce its own *in situ* artistic concentrations); and agglomeration economies (enabled by the size of the community or the presence of an organizational catalyst, such as a university). They note that there is a certain British or North American stereotype of the rural artist in a bucolic setting that is sustained by survey data (Bunting & Mitchell, 2001). There are also the later twentieth century artists who “exploit” tourists’ ease of access into remote areas, and use these areas as a base for their art practice (Bunting & Mitchell, 2001).

Mitchell, Bunting & Piccioni (2004) examine visual artists who choose to live in small Canadian communities. The study shows that counter-urbanizing artists are not a homogenous group, but differ according to their employment activity and reasons for moving to rural areas. Attachment to place was found to be very important among those artists interviewed for the study, as well as pragmatic motivations such as lower cost of living and the flexibility to work from a non-urban location. Hracs (2005) found that artists living in Prince Edward County, Ontario, migrated to the rural area for reasons such as: rural landscapes are the raw material for their (visual) artistic production, the lower cost of living and running an artistic business in a rural areas, and the opportunity to live and work in the same place.

Looking at non-metropolitan counties in the United States, McGranahan & Wojan (2007a) identify “a strong association between natural and recreational amenities and the share of highly creative occupations in the local workforce,” characteristics which may factor into the

¹⁸ Prince Edward County faces big issues of providing health services for an aging population – the result of the in-migration. Of great concern is attracting doctors to the rural region to service the aging population of former urban dwellers, who expect the same level of services in their new community as they had in their previous home (Donald, 2008).

location decisions of non-metro artists (cited in Wojan, Lambert & McGranahan, 2007b, p. 718). They also found that “the rural creative class is older and more likely to be married compared with urban peers, suggestive of the lifecycle choices of rural artists identified in anecdotal accounts” (p. 718). Markusen & Johnson (2006) suggest that “the lower cost of living and the possibilities for a high quality of life in amenity-rich rural areas may be attractive to artists that have established their reputations in urban arts markets” (cited in Wojan, Lambert & McGranahan, 2007b, p. 718). Hracs (2005) describes the rural creative class as being made up of “older and more established individuals who would rather enjoy a creative lifestyle than drive the new economy” (p. 33).

In a statistical test of the correlation between artists and various location factors in communities throughout the United States (metro and non-metro), Wojan, Lambert & McGranahan (2007b) find some strong similarities between the location preferences of metro and non-metro artists, but with some notable differences (see Table 5).

Table 5. Location preferences among metro and non-metro artists in the United States

Similarities among metro and non-metro artists	Differences between metro and non-metro artists
College towns and university cities are powerful draws	Natural amenities such as mountains, dry (sunny) winters, and combinations of forest and open space are more strongly associated with artist location in non-metro areas
Specialization in business services	
The presence of an educated population	Population growth in the previous decade (1980–1990) was associated with a larger arts share in non-metro areas, but not associated with the metro arts share. “This is consistent with artists moving to amenity rich rural areas that have also seen substantial population growth, and artists not flocking to the fastest growing metro counties” (p. 727).
Negative effect of large retail establishments, which may relate to automobile dependent planning (which the findings suggest tend to repel artists)	
Diversity in lodging options	Moderate population density (at least relative to other metro areas) in metro counties was associated with artist location
	The share of the population in non-family households did have a positive effect on the arts employment share in non-metro counties but not in metro counties. (This variable serves as a rough proxy for Florida’s gay index.)
	Metro artists tended to locate in warmer cities

Derived from Wojan, Lambert & McGranahan (2007b)

A detailed survey of England's East Midlands region in 2006-07 focused, in part, on the draw for creative businesses to relocate to rural areas. The majority of creative businesses surveyed stated they were based in rural areas "for opportunistic or lifestyle rather than strategic reasons – 'quality of life' was often cited. Only one company moved into its rural setting because it offered the facilities it needed" (Burns & Kirkpatrick, 2008b, p. 27). There was also a marked pattern of "returners" and a few very rare cases of "urban dwellers with no previous local connections" starting a business in rural areas (p. 27). Key attractions for businesses in East Midlands included the availability of professional networks or a physical meeting/networking hub (a gallery or cultural venue); relationships with local tourist information services; lower facility cost (found especially in the industrial design sector); and policy initiatives, such as rural authorities offering arts incentives to make use of buildings (Burns & Kirkpatrick, 2008b, p. 28).

The literature also addresses the trend of artists fleeing urban centres in order to escape high rents, often attracted by the same quality of place/quality of life place marketing strategies used for tourists (Baeker, 2008). Both groups expect the amenities they are accustomed to having in urban settings and often bring or arrange for these services in their new homes or vacation areas (Gibson, 2004). In such a situation of transition, equalization of opportunity for all citizens is important (Foundation for Rural Living, 2004), and the potential for polarization between original rural residents and new urban transplants must be considered (Hracs, 2005).

The process of community reinvention and the dynamic impacts of these relocations continue to evolve over time. As artists relocate or develop their trade in rural markets, the development of successful creative industries and tourist-attracting festivals may lead to increased rents and cost of living in rural areas, making life harder in the long run for rural artisans (Gibson, 2004).

3 ■ The role of the arts in economic diversification and revitalization

Despite an urban affinity, the creative class – perhaps more able and apt than others in the workforce to choose where to live based on quality-of-life considerations – can be drawn out of cities to high-amenity rural locations. Their activities, in turn, appear to generate new jobs and local growth. Rural areas lack the business and consumer services available to urban businesses and residents, but rural areas tend to have the upper hand in landscape, which may service the creative temperament.

(McGranahan & Wojan, 2007b)

One of the weaknesses of the northern economy is it's transient. People come in, they make big money and they leave We think of economy in terms of jobs, projects and things like that, but I think there's a softer economy that involves people staying and building around where they want to be.... All along I've been arguing that healthy arts and culture is a key to that.

(writer Rob Budde, Prince George, BC, cited in Follett, 2008)

Confronted with long-term structural change away from agriculture and other resource industries, communities are re-visioning and diversifying rural livelihoods while considering the opportunities of information and communication technologies to access distant markets. The pervasive influence of small and micro-scale firms conditions economic growth in rural areas, and a prevailing focus of research is on the entrepreneurial capacity of the local population and building a critical mass of this capacity (Labrianidis, 2004).

While urban centres continue to dominate creative industries¹⁹, many rural regeneration and economic development strategies to “harness creativity” are focusing on approaches that capitalize on smaller-scale, networked, and niche initiatives (Gibson, 2004, p. 1). Gibson explains that the arts – within a context of smaller, innovation-based niche industry development – are the focus of much economic development in Australia, as strategies move away from place-based, large-scale projects. Recent data from Australia “demonstrate the extent to which creativity, cultural activities and the arts, with their more intensely interlinked networks of workers, micro-businesses and subcontractors, generate more ‘fizz for your buck’ than larger, single flagship regional development projects such as mines, building construction projects, or large plant facilities for the manufacturing sector” (p. 2). However, standard urban policy mechanisms such as incubators, tax incentives, the promotion of clusters or hubs, and so forth may not be appropriate or sufficient for regional or rural areas to meet the challenge of entrenched artistic capitals and the issue of scale, wherein rural artisans and artists are faced with smaller markets.

3.1. Two economic conceptual frameworks

Current thinking on regional (rural) development focuses on **regional (or rural) development platforms** as a post-sectoral or post-cluster formation perspective: “Industry in the contemporary era sees itself as offering flexible, persuasive platforms around which numerous product and process innovations may occur utilizing cross-sectoral synergies” (Cooke & Lazzeretti, 2008, p. 6). Many authors are exploring the notion of “rural agro-food-cultural and creative platforms” (p. 5). This approach theorizes contemporary regional development as “an interactive, integrated and relational question of identifying rural-urban regional assets and ‘constructing regional advantage’ ... in ways that express the key factor in the knowledge economy, which is that novel products arise from public investment in research and private investment in innovation” (p. 6).

A state-of-the-art review of relevant literature on this topic, synthesized in Cooke & Lazzeretti (2008), reveals three dimensions:

¹⁹ This has been shown to be in part because of the “global city” status of larger centres and the appeal of this status to the creative industries, primarily music recording, film, and television. For example, national headquarters of several entertainment firms are located in Sydney, Australia, and tax incentives are offered to film crews. The critical mass of urban centres means there is a broader possible audience for experimental art, more clients for fashion and decorating, and more organized creative support communities (Gibson, 2004).

1. A *worlds of production* approach to regional development, in which “different forms of production organization are internally coherent in terms of their driving institutions, network interactions and conventions” (pp. 6-7). This resolves the four tensions of: standardized (mass-production) vs. dedicated (customized to certain niche requirements), and specialized (generic products produced in specialized ways) vs. generic (specialized processes used for standard products). The approach works best in agro-food and tourism industries.
2. A *related variety* approach to evolutionary economic geography, primarily a laterally inclined concept which introduces the idea of *lateral absorptive capacity* such as complementary knowledge spillovers among neighbouring industries or business activities that could enable a novel process or product innovation to diffuse rapidly among firms or industries. This is particularly of interest in regards to tourism, in rural regions with reasonable contact with urban markets.
3. A *regional innovation systems* approach to knowledge utilization, which emphasizes the importance of two sub-systems: a regional *knowledge exploration* sub-system and, interacting with this, a *knowledge exploitation* sub-system focused on business innovation (e.g., firms and intermediaries). This approach, however, is rarely used in rural settings, nor in regards to “more traditional and cultural or creative industry” (it usually focuses on scientific and technological knowledge exploration and exploitation) (p. 11).

A second body of economic literature on **resources** is also informative. A constructionist economic approach views *resources* as constructed, relative, and “evolutive” products of human ingenuity (Kebir & Crevoisier, 2008, p. 50). *Resources* are defined and developed through entrepreneurial intention, and are understood as a relational process between an object and a production system. The link (the resource) is created when an actor (e.g., an entrepreneur) intends to use an object within a production process.

Although cultural objects are the result of logics in society that are largely *extra-economic*, such as political, social, cultural, natural, and so on, in this economic context *cultural resources* are defined as “all elements of a cultural nature that can potentially serve a purpose, or be useful, within a production process. This means all those cultural objects identified as becoming integrated within a process of good or service production” (pp. 52-53).

Further, economic exchanges are also social exchanges and cultural communication. The cultural component of products explicitly forms part of value creation:

In becoming an economic resource, a cultural ‘object’ finds itself embedded within commercial relationships. ... The production system and its clients influence the objects and, in turn, their own reproduction. A link is established between a local community that succeeds in relating its cultural resources with a production system and its markets/clients. The link is no longer simply a commercial, functional or technological one; but is also – to a virtually complete extent – a form of cultural communication. (pp. 48, 49)

A resource is not established once and for all, but is an ongoing adjustment and re-articulation of the relation between an object and a changing production system. This link is characterized by its instability as objects and production systems interact or co-evolve (Kebir & Crevoisier, 2008; Norgaard, 1994). The selected objects “adopted as a resource” enter into an interplay of

perceptions held within the community and those of the clients/markets concerned. The reductive nature of this communication, which becomes increasingly stereotyped, is reinforced through standardization within the production and expansion of openings related to consumption (Kebir & Crevoisier, 2008).

3.2. Key themes regarding economic development roles for the arts in rural areas

Numerous reports articulate roles and potential for the arts and creative industries as strategic economic sectors in rural areas. Within this literature, three key themes emerge: (1) the arts and creative industries – brand new or evolving from traditional industries – as significant contributors to regional and rural economies; (2) creative employment as a stimulant to broader economic revitalization; and (3) tourism-based cultural opportunities. Informed by this base, two overarching themes are also emerging: (1) the attraction of artists or the “creative class” to rural communities, and (2) the applicability of urban approaches to rural settings. Cautions in using an economic development frame for cultural development are also evident.

While some of this literature focuses on documenting the economic impacts of arts activity in a geographical area (see listings in Smiles, 2006), other work focuses on **recognizing and growing existing industry/initiatives**, including pragmatic thinking about the business issues and strategies concerning market access and new market development (in part through the use of computer and information technologies) and issues of sustainable business development (e.g., Barringer et al., 2004; Burns & Kirkpatrick, 2008b).

For example, the 2007 *Highlands and Islands Enterprise Creative Industries Study* in Scotland looked at access to new markets and networks, business support, and practical training projects. *Financing Creativity* reviewed the supply and demand for finance for the creative sector in North-west England (New Media Partners & Culture Finance North West, 2004). Markusen (2007), Hracs (2005), and Burns & Kirkpatrick (2008b) all note that practices of *import substitution* develop and sustain local markets for cultural products (e.g., pottery used in local restaurants, spurring visitors to purchase similar pieces).

Burns & Kirkpatrick (2008b) found that the creative industry sector in the rural parts of the East Midlands, England, differed from that often found in urban areas with “fewer young and start-up companies and more businesses with established markets” (p. 4). They also discovered a complementary relationship between urban and rural creative industry sectors. Factors for growth included proximity to an urban centre, intra-regional transport links, openness to inward migration, high levels of business start-ups (linked to attraction of newcomers), and retention of skilled workers.

Other studies focus on **attracting and developing new creative industries/initiatives**.

For example, a major report by the Littoral Arts Trust for Arts Council England outlined a number of initiatives the government was advocating for rural communities, primarily connected to the development of *new* businesses:

development of rural creative industries, exploring new cultural interfaces with farming and agri-businesses, expanding the role of new media, ICT and advanced telecommunications in rural areas, promoting creative and artistic solutions to farm diversification, and employing leading designers, artists and architects to invent new

‘value added’ applications and creative processes for non-foods fibre crops, renewables, and alternative land use projects. (Hunter, 2003-05, p. 7)

In Australia, the potential for developing new creative industries in rural and remote locations, enabled by technology, has been investigated through studies such as *Regional Development of Screen Industries in the Digital Era*, from New South Wales, Australia (Henkel, 2006).

In Nova Scotia, a number of exploratory digital arts projects have been developed at rurally based Acadia University, highlighting the importance of such institutions as potential generators and incubators of innovative ideas. For example, the *Ideas in Residence/Creative Dislocations* project investigated how digital technologies can encourage people to engage with the natural environment in the Bay of Fundy ecosystem, and expand our knowledge of lived experiences of environments, both natural and built (artist Gair Dunlop). The *New Technologies/Creative Practices in Music, Audio and Multimedia: From Theory to the Marketplace* project evaluated the impact of new technologies for the creation and dissemination of music and other forms of audio images (Dr. Janet Marontate and Christoph Both). The research/ commercialization *MusicPath* project is currently underway. MusicPath represents a system and method of delivering high quality music instrument instruction and performance over the internet in real time.

The arts are also positioned as a **creative stimulant to other industries**, or as a **core component of a broader transformation process**. The research approaches to these topics vary widely. For example, *Bright Stars* (Cuesta, Gillespie & Lillis, 2005) outlines the iterative growth and development linked to cultural initiatives, providing an organic perspective to gradual community revitalization, attraction, vitality, and change. Jane Andrew’s current dissertation research, entitled *Towards an Understanding of the Relationship between Creative Capital and Regional Economic and Employment Development*, examines the extent to which “creativity indices” extend our knowledge of the role and contribution of cultural capital and the creative industries to economic and employment growth in a regional setting (cited in Smiles, 2006).

Wojan, Lambert & McGranahan (2007b) statistically test the hypothesis that “the same unobservable factors that attract a relative abundance of Bohemians positively influence local economic dynamism” (p. 712). The results of this U.S. study confirm that **non-metro environments conducive to arts activity also tend to promote faster rates of growth**, finding a strong positive effect of a larger creative class employment share on net migration, employment growth, and net increase in number of business establishments. The main contribution of the study is “empirical confirmation that a relative surplus of Bohemians is likely to reveal a vibrant creative milieu”; however, it “does not allow concluding that a particular strategy for promoting the arts will increase economic dynamism” (p. 734). The non-metro results “demonstrate a true contribution of place to economic dynamism ... our explanation of regional performance does not rely on the location of particular quantities in a place (e.g. human capital, R&D spending, transportation infrastructure) but on a proxy for a particular quality of place” (p. 734).

In the process of diversifying their economic base, especially those that are traditionally agriculture-based or sites of resource-extraction industries, many rural communities have also moved towards **tourism**-based trades. *Rural tourism* has emerged as a subset of the tourism industry involving the marketing of rural culture as a destination, including heritage aspects

as well as natural landscapes.²⁰ *Cultural tourism* is recognized as the fastest growing segment of the tourist industry (BC Arts Council, cited in Follett, 2008). Altogether, the growing interest in cultural (including heritage and creative tourism) and rural tourism can offer significant opportunities for economic and community renewal.²¹ However, as Brooks-Joiner & McKay (2008) found, there is also concern that local capacity issues are recognized and addressed prior or simultaneous to any cultural tourism development strategies.

In the literature, there is an emphasis on tourism as a replacement strategy for a community when traditional economies fail (e.g., Hracs, 2005; MacDonald & Jolliffe, 2003). MacDonald & Jolliffe (2003) note that culture and heritage is often well preserved in rural areas and, in times of decline, rural populations tend to cling to these traditions, and can use them as socioeconomic development engines. However, some tourism experts warn that “tourism is unlikely to be a sustainable development option on which to base a weak rural economy but is better used as a means of complementing a local economy that is already thriving” (Butler & Clark, 1992, in Richards, 2007, p. 72).

In an article examining the development of cultural tourism in the Evangeline Region of Prince Edward Island, MacDonald & Jolliffe (2003) outline a four-stage model of cultural rural tourism development (see Figure 2).

Rural tourism is closely linked to discussions of *place marketing*. Techniques of *identity building or branding* have included a tradition of marketing folk or transitional art to develop community identity (and festivals, as previously described). Alternately, as Burns & Kirkpatrick (2008b) note, the presence of art galleries, studios, musicians, performance venues, and companies can “influence new formations of cultural identity” and “introduce more contemporary notions of expressive value and lifestyle” to communities (p. 34).

On a regional scale, “cultural routes” or tours based on a local industry such as wine-making or on art studios, are also important place-based marketing tools (Richards, 2007) and effective means to attract and circulate visitors throughout a rural region.²² A leading practice in this area is HandMade in America, a non-profit organization located in rural western North Carolina that promotes the fine craft of handmade objects as a means to sustain communities and economic development (NGA Center for Best Practices, 2001). As part of its activities, it has developed a Small Towns Program, a program of “mentoring, technical assistance, self-help, and learning from each other and from neighbouring communities” in which everyone is welcome to participate – “from the first-time hobbyist to the full-time, one-of-a-kind design professional craftsmen” (Brotman, 2007).

²⁰ The Tourism Research Innovation Project at Vancouver Island University, Nanaimo, has developed a significant bibliography on rural tourism. It is available here: www.trip-project.ca/resources.php?page=rt

²¹ In England, Jones (2004) found that arts activities are a major boost to rural tourism, and that artists and community-based arts activities are contributing to the regeneration of collapsing communities. Voluntary Arts Network (2006) notes that when the English countryside shut down for eight months due to Foot and Mouth disease, “£7bn was lost in tourism revenues – much of it culture related” (p. 1). The U.S. National Governors Association Center for Best Practices points to “thriving tourism and cultural destinations” that are “growing out of once-latent artistic and cultural resources and contributing to economic sustainability in rural communities and regions” (p. 3).

²² For example, the Okanagan Cultural Corridor brings together a wide variety of arts studios and cultural attractions with wine producers, hotels, and other tourism businesses. In Nova Scotia, the Studio Rally map guides visitors to art and craft studios throughout the province; similarly, the Alberta Muse Cruise provides a travelling guide to Alberta’s “visual storytellers” and their studios. In New Mexico, a series of subject-defined tours have been developed including tours focusing on textiles, ceramics, and women artists, among other themes.

Some marketing strategies, however, can lead to a disconnect between residents and promoters, as exaggerated tourism claims must be met, and investments in promotional claims may not lead to a sufficient return or benefit to residents (Gibson & Davidson, 2004; Richards, 2007). Alternately, the successful commercialization of heritage or other cultural assets may lead to processes of creative destruction, as previously described. Extensive research literature addresses issues of sustainability of sensitive heritage and cultural resources, tourism impacts on local cultures, and related issues of tourism activity.

Figure 2. Four-stage cultural rural tourism development model

Stage 1. A few residents recognize opportunities and integrate tourism resources into socioeconomic planning

The process seems to begin slowly when a few tourists arrive in the community and some residents see an opportunity. This stage includes more of individual offerings.

Stage 2. Community groups plan and implement tourism strategies as part of economic development

It is the stage to plan and to implement strategies that start to benefit the whole region. This will develop into more formal plans based on cooperation among the community's residents, organizations, and businesses. In rural areas, this might involve partnerships between local and regional groups as well as national organizations and various levels of government. ... At this stage, examples may include festivals and special cultural events to attract more tourists into an area.

Stage 3. Developing community partnerships and a formal tourism body help to turn plans into enduring attractions

[This stage involves] developing the plans into more advanced and formal cultural rural tourism offerings that benefit the community in the short-term and conserve the resources for the long-term. At this stage, there are increased efficiency and effective development of more permanent attractions, activities, and educational programs of the natural environment, historical sites, and cultural experiences. A tourism organization for the region also takes control of the process to ensure more coherent and integrated marketing of the area.

Stage 4. Fully centralized, cooperative, and long-term planning and marketing of tourism occurs

At this point, the planning should be responsible, appropriate, and enduring for short and long-term community benefits while also preserving its resources. It is at this fourth stage that five principles proposed by the US National Trust play a role to help guide the preservation of long-term cultural rural tourism. These principles include authenticity and quality, education and interpretation, preservation and protection, local priorities and capacity, and partnerships (Prohaska, 1995).

Source: MacDonald & Jolliffe (2003, pp. 309-310)

The attraction of artists or the “creative class” to rural communities, enabled by internet broadband access, is viewed by many communities as a potential key to economic diversification. In the United States, the work of D.A. McGranahan, T.R. Wojan, and D.M. Lambert is providing statistical evidence to explain the presence and growth of artistic populations in certain rural areas, and the correlation of these individuals with job growth in rural areas in 1990-2004: “counties with a high proportion of creative-class residents generally had job growth rates that were twice as high as counties with less creative class presence” (McGranahan & Wojan, 2007b). While the amenities that attracted the creative class may be responsible for this job growth, the presence of the creative class may itself also create amenities (McGranahan & Wojan, 2007b).

Some researchers warn of the potential of introducing an inappropriate framework to rural-based cultural initiatives: for example, trying to apply a generic “creativity index” (e.g., Florida, 2002) to all rural regions may not be appropriate, and researchers and rural communities should be cautious of how such an index could potentially discredit alternate understandings of creativity and culture (Gibson & Klocker, 2005). Local industries and populations colour the cultural expression of rural communities, which may not figure into national measures or national policy-making, such as indigenous cultural expressions (Luckman & Gibson, in press). For similar reasons, some researchers caution the exclusive adoption of an economic approach to cultural development. For example, Gibson & Klocker (2005) point out that only some types of activities best “fit” within this approach, and opportunities to use the “cultural turn” in economic policy for the benefit of rural areas may limit the “alternative” arts activities found in rural areas that do not fit into the economic investment profile.

The idea of transferring “urban-centric” creative economy policies to rural locations is also questioned. Smaller communities may not fit the same model, even though creative development may be part of their overall economic planning (McCool & Moisey, 2001). Creative work that does not have an immediately visible effect on economic systems – such as “R&D” experimental-stage art development – may not have measurable economic returns and its essential input into the overall creative economy may not be recognized in smaller cultural milieus (Luckman & Gibson, in press).

Chris Gibson (2004) asserts that “the world of creative production is more complicated than the image of a simple ‘city-country divide’” and stresses the “importance in thinking beyond urban and rural spaces as bounded, separate entities” (pp. 5, 6). In non-urban locations, “networks and flows” of people, information, and creative production are highly important. Inter-regional networks support creative producers to lever opportunities, to seek wider markets, to “to open-up access to more sympathetic gatekeepers in the key industries,” and to break down perceptions of a “city-country divide” (p. 8). The role of incubators and nodes in scattered networks of cultural producers is also vital, allowing for finer-grained, intensely networked creative economies (Gibson, 2004; see also Burns & Kirkpatrick, 2008b).

4. Governance strategies and initiatives

This literature review uncovered a number of major policy-related studies examining issues and proposing possible paths to support arts development in rural communities. A valuable complement to the current work may be an outline of the policy and program framework relating to the arts in rural communities, including a comprehensive review of the extensive array of recommendations and sub-recommendations in the policy-related studies.

In general, governance of the arts and culture in a rural context is situated within both (a) broader arts and cultural policies and (b) rural strategic policy initiatives and/or agriculture policy. The arts may also be embedded within or linked to other pan-national policies such as education, environment, sustainability, industry, community capacity development, voluntary sector initiatives, and so forth. Although recommendations are usually put forward to a particular government department or agency, they generally consider implementation within a multi-level cooperative or collaborative governance context, where multiple levels of government – working together with communities – are needed to fully implement the cultural revitalization initiatives recommended. A specialized administrative structure and/or targeted policy to address this topic seem rare.

Regional Arts Australia was the most institutionalized approach to the arts in rural areas located in this study, a body representing an Australia-wide network of (state-based) regional arts organizations and programs in regional Australia, which is funded by the Australian Government through the Regional Arts Fund. In 2005 it undertook an extensive consultation with rural-based Australians on “the nature, challenges and opportunities of their work in and aspirations for the arts in their communities and towns,” and set out priorities for the future and strategic responses (Regional Arts Australia, 2005a, p. 8). (See also the companion paper by Kim Dunphy.)

In the U.K., the national government’s 2004 Rural Strategy²³ – “a fundamental rethink of its relationship with the countryside” – set the context for a number of initiatives in support of a coordinated arts and cultural response to this new framework (Arts Council England, 2005, p. 3). In 2004, Arts Council England undertook an extensive consultation exercise to ensure that its “policies, programmes and investment streams ... were meeting the needs of the arts in rural areas” and published its priorities for the future of the arts in rural England in 2005 (p. 2). The Arts Council also funded a two-year study by Littoral Arts Trust (2001-03), which resulted in a proposed Cultural Strategy for Rural England and a Rural Cultural Forum, among other outcomes. Littoral’s 2003 report (revised in 2006) proposes a New Rural Arts development strategy that links the rural and agricultural policy agendas, and is part of “a wider cultural re-engagement with the ‘twin’ discourses on agriculture and environmental sustainability” (p. 9). Advocacy to implement a coordinated rural cultural strategy for England continues (see, e.g., Hunter, 2008).

Situating these ideas in a broader European context, the Rural Cultural Forum (Hunter, 2008) notes that similar ideas are being taken forward in other EU countries: “Government cultural,

²³ The Government has since adopted the Rural Development Programme for England (2007/8 – 2013) (Hunter, 2008). The implementation of this strategy falls within the context of the EU CAP (Reform) Pillar II regulations for rural development (Hunter, 2003-06).

agriculture and rural development agencies in Italy, France, Germany and the Netherlands are currently progressing innovative media, cultural and arts investment partnerships with their respective farming, agriculture industry and rural communities” (p. 2, further details in the report). In general, these activities seem to be “in process” at this time (see also the companion paper by Dr. Lidia Varbanova).

In the United States, attention to the arts in rural communities was found mainly at the state level, as indicated in studies such as those found in Minnesota (Shifferd, 2005; Rodning Bash, 2005), the creative economy report for Maine (e.g., Barringer et al., 2004), and articles on the Wisconsin Idea (e.g., Gard Ewell, 2006), with variations in approaches in other states and regions expected (see also the companion paper by Dr. Patrick Overton).

In Canada, government attention to the arts in rural communities was found within occasional national studies, such as Statistics Canada reports (e.g., Singh, 2006; Schimpf & Sereda, 2007), reports with data on distribution of funding and activity (e.g., Canada Council for the Arts, 2001), and the Canadian Cultural Observatory’s *In Focus* feature (2007). However, there was no evident overarching policy framework for the various studies. Policy- and planning-related attention also appeared at the very local level with studies of particular communities or regions, such as Prince Edward County, Ontario (e.g., Donald, 2008). A few provincial and regional reports were examined as part of the current study, but no rural-specific ideas and data were found in them. Further attention on the rural context may be evident in comprehensive province- and territorial-level cultural policies or within general “state of the arts” reports (i.e., for a potential future policy framework review).

Although a thorough analysis of the policy initiatives was beyond the scope of the current review, a scan of key recommendations revealed six reoccurring categories:

1. Community buy-in and local ownership;
2. Engaging youth;
3. Developing leadership;
4. Funding;
5. Education and partnerships, including partnerships between cultural organizations and the broader community as well as partnerships between non-profits and private organizations; and
6. Implementation and further study.

Table 6 presents some examples of recommendations and priority statements taken from the literature, sorted into these six categories. Readers should note that the individual reports contain extensive lists of recommendations and “sub-recommendations” and a more comprehensive review should highlight a broader array of topics (for example, arts facility development, which is highlighted in Regional Arts Australia, 2005a, as well as the U.K. touring studies). These six reoccurring themes are meant to be useful starting points for negotiating this wider array of ideas and recommendations.

Table 6. Key reoccurring themes in policy-related study recommendations

	Examples of statements in reports			
	Canada	United Kingdom	United States	Australia
Community Buy-in and Local Ownership	<p>Key factors in building and sustaining community engagement in rural municipalities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community buy-in - Sense of urgency about a way of life that is being lost - Recognize resources, assets, and values that are embedded in the community - Integrate heritage into community life 	<p>Map new practices, contexts and partnerships: Learn how to work with farming communities</p> <p>Promote a more socially inclusive, grassroots and culturally diverse definition of the arts in rural communities</p> <p>Construct the new cultural narratives for agriculture: Develop new aesthetic, ethical and theoretical coordinates required to tackle the complexities of farming and agriculture</p>	<p>Grow awareness and pride in artists and art work in the community</p> <p>The arts valued by non-arts leaders as essential to community well-being</p> <p>Encourage and support local community actors to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish group for arts advocacy and planning - Include arts activities in key community festivals - Pursue extensive media coverage <p>Encourage the strengthening of sense of place and history through the arts</p>	<p>Local identity and ownership of the arts and culture is priority #1 for the future</p> <p>Community capacity building: How can the arts be better recognized and equipped as an effective medium for developing more sustainable communities?</p> <p>Strengthen regional centres: How can the arts respond to current issues, the need for strong identity, and social cohesion in regional centres large and small?</p>
Engaging Youth	<p>Greater efforts should be undertaken to address the perception of both youth and others that youth who stay in their rural communities rather than leave to acquire different experiences, lack ambition and knowledge to make valuable contributions</p>	<p>The lack of young entrepreneurs may itself be significant, suggesting that support for young entrepreneurs may be insufficiently focused on rural opportunities, and that universities are insufficiently geared up to support and incubate new enterprise for their graduates in the rural hinterlands of the cities in which they operate</p>	<p>Include arts activity that is intentionally inclusive of all ages and socio-cultural groups</p>	<p>Show how the arts can contribute to more fulfilling lives for regional youth</p> <p>Investigate the creation of a youth element in funding programs</p>
Developing Leadership	<p>Visionary leadership needed</p> <p>Encourage a more adventurous economic climate – can be fostered by supporting entrepreneurial leadership</p>	<p>Support capacity building through programs; provide support for frontline organizations</p>	<p>Identify and cultivate leadership: Leaders motivate communities to engage in the creative economy</p> <p>Develop a critical mass of leadership, connected into the larger community, establishing coalitions with other community groups</p>	<p>Value the professional artists in the community and celebrate their achievements</p> <p>Local government can provide important leadership in valuing the arts</p>

Examples of statements in reports				
	Canada	United Kingdom	United States	Australia
Funding	<p>Bigger is often considered better in terms of having a critical mass to justify the need for recreational and cultural services and the cost-effectiveness of programs in rural, remote, and northern communities</p> <p>The financial situation of arts councils/boards in rural areas is very fragile</p> <p>There are concerns that the needs of rural-based artists very rarely correspond to the eligibility criteria of national programs</p>	<p>Develop appropriate coordination, funding, and implementation mechanisms</p> <p>There should be a formal commitment on the part of Arts Council England in support of the new Rural Arts Strategy, funded at a level equivalent to that provided by the Arts Council for other similar strategic national partnerships</p> <p>Inner city communities and urban economic regeneration schemes have benefited significantly from strategically directed and generously funded arts and cultural investment program, as should rural schemes</p>	<p>Consider funding strategies that can respond directly and appropriately to specific community ideas, needs, situations, and opportunities</p> <p>Develop an investment regimen that is flexible and adaptive</p> <p>Funding agencies should coordinate funding strategies</p> <p>Provide direct support to the development of the local arts infrastructure</p> <p>"Fund the foundation of the pyramid"</p>	<p>Local control over funding decisions is seen as a rural priority, as well as knowledge of who is involved in making jury or other funding decisions</p> <p>A desire for small grants with flexible criteria, which involved a minimal amount of paperwork, as well as funding that is ongoing, subject to a performance agreement, rather than applied for on an annual basis</p> <p>Support the development of cultural tourism: How can the arts contribute to greater economic growth and diversity through tourism?</p>
Education and Partnerships		<p>Explore new experimental, creative, and cultural interfaces capable of reconnecting the urban consumer arts and cultural institutions with the new agricultural and rural agendas</p> <p>Develop the connection between urban creative industries and rural post-agriculture economy</p>	<p>Establish or extend a training institute to support the long-term growth of community cultural development leadership in rural/suburban communities</p> <p>Prepare the workforce: Increase educational opportunities to learn skills used by the art and culture industries</p> <p>Provide marketing and collaboration workshops for and encourage networking among artists</p>	<p>Governments should insist on the arts being part of the core curriculum, for all students.</p>
Implementation and Further Study	<p>Networking, processes, and infrastructure are areas in which rural voluntary organizations must improve</p> <p>Leadership development, systems, and structures to support volunteers are lacking</p>	<p>Develop a national arts and agriculture research, development, and pedagogy program; and possible agency, national initiative, or regional pilot for research and training</p> <p>The arts sector should review its hitherto (mainly) urban priorities and bias in the light of proposed rural proofing guidelines</p>	<p>Develop and implement strategies: A range of policies to support and sustain the creative economy must be formulated</p>	<p>There is an urgent need for robust statistics that can be used in media campaigns</p>

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Annex A.

Community Profiles – Canada

These community profiles draw on examples across the country and are, of course, not exhaustive. Some are profiles of towns that have used arts and creativity as a staple of their community planning, while others are profiles of individual projects that have aided in revitalizing the area.

All populations are approximate.

List of community profiles:

Dawson City, Yukon
Osoyoos, British Columbia
Alert Bay, British Columbia
Skidegate, British Columbia
Hazelton, British Columbia
Chemanius, British Columbia
Nelson, British Columbia
Rosebud, Alberta
Strathcona County, Alberta
Assiniboia, Saskatchewan
Val Marie, Saskatchewan
Prince Edward County, Ontario
Grand Argenteuil, Quebec
Amqui, Quebec
Bouctouche, New Brunswick
Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia
Canning, Nova Scotia
Bear River, Nova Scotia

Briefs:

Elora, Ontario
Eastend, Saskatchewan
Claybank, Saskatchewan
Kensington, Prince Edward Island
Norris Point, Woody Point, and Rocky Harbour, Newfoundland

Répertoire d'actions culturelles en milieu rural :

List of profiles developed by Les arts et la ville

Dawson City, Yukon

Population 2,000-3,500 (seasonal)

Overview

According to the Klondike Institute of Arts and Culture, Canada's Yukon Territory has perhaps the highest per capita population of artists, at every level in every discipline, in the country. As the Klondike Institute of Arts and Culture states, many artists came for two weeks – 20 years ago – and fell for the unique landscape and quality of life offered in the small city. With a combination of natural beauty, colourful history, festivals and arts institutions, the small city of Dawson has supported and produced many widely recognized artists.

Main Players

Dawson's cultural institutions and organizations, including Pierre Berton House, Dawson City Art Society, Dawson City Music Festival, Klondike Institute of Arts and Culture, Dawson City Museum, and Dānojā Zho (Long Ago House) Cultural Centre

Key Results

Dawson promotes a certain mystique in its appeal: "There is something special about this land" reads the Klondike Institute of Arts and Culture website, "Why is it often said by writers-in-residence completing their Pierre Berton House residency program: 'I won't leave unless I can come back'?" The town also promotes the timelessness in the appeal of its art, including that rooted in the history of the 1890s gold rush that made the city famous.

There are key groups in Dawson that form an infrastructure around the arts. The Dawson City Art Society (DCAS), formed in 1998, is a community organization created to enrich the quality of life through enhancement of art, culture, and the economy in the Yukon. Formed by local artists, the Society purchased the neglected, historic Odd Fellows Hall in Dawson City, and refurbished the building. To fulfill their mandate, the DCAS created the School of Visual Art, operated by the Klondike Institute of Arts and Culture, the operating arm of DCAS.

The school is located in a 7,800 square foot historic building in downtown Dawson City, custom designed specifically for the needs of the program with workspaces for each student, common studio facilities, a lecture room, a media lab, indoor/outdoor common areas, a sculpture shop, a library/resource centre, a student gallery and an art supplies store. Storage areas for student projects and supplies are provided throughout the building, and wireless is available throughout the facility.

Festivals in Dawson draw on its history, including the famous gold rush. The word *authentic* is used with some pride, as historical accuracy is included in all heritage events. Dawson hosts an annual short film festival, arts festival, and several artist residencies.

More Information

<http://www.kiac.org/>

Osoyoos, British Columbia

Overview

NK'MIP Desert Cultural Centre was opened in September 2002. Located in Osoyoos, BC, the Centre celebrates the history and culture of the Okanagan First Nation and the desert lands that they have lived on for thousands of years. The Nk'Mip Desert lands are one of Canada's three most endangered ecosystems and are home to many rare plant and animal species. The Centre provides visitors an opportunity to experience the rich Okanagan culture and desert environments, with guided walks, a traditional Okanagan village, and desert reptile programs.

The mission of the NK'MIP Desert Cultural Centre is to provide visitors with an authentic and unique experience that promotes respect and understanding of the living culture of the Okanagan People and the desert lands that sustained them.

Key Players

The Osoyoos Indian Band Development Corporation manages businesses with annual budgets in excess of \$17 million dollars and administers its own health, social, educational and municipal services. Situated in one of Canada's premier agricultural and tourism regions, the Band's 32,000 acres offer opportunities in agriculture, eco-tourism, commercial, industrial, and residential developments. Through leases and joint ventures the community has built meaningful business relationships that have created social and employment opportunities for both natives and non-natives in the South Okanagan.

Lessons Learned

Economic development, and Native control over this development, seem to be key.

"We are very focused on the future, and we realize that we create this future by our actions. The single most important key to First Nation self-reliance is economic development."

– Chief Clarence Louie

More Information

<http://www.oib.ca/profile.asp>

<http://www.cultureandcommunities.ca/resources/cultural-facility-profiles/cultural-spaces-community-impacts/nkmip-desert-cultural-centre.html>

Alert Bay, British Columbia

Overview

Alert Bay is the home of the U'mista Cultural Centre and home to the Kwakwaka'wakw people. The mandate of the U'mista Cultural Society is to ensure the survival of all aspects of the cultural heritage of the Kwakwaka'wakw. U'mista Cultural Centre is one of the longest-operating and most successful First Nations cultural facilities in BC, founded in 1980 as a ground breaking project to house potlatch artifacts which had been seized by government during an earlier period of cultural repression. The return of the potlatch artifacts not only provided U'mista's name ("the return of something important") and sparked a general trend toward repatriation of First Nations and cultural artifacts, it caused the creation of a physical facility and human resources infrastructure which have been successfully operated for over two decades. U'mista now operates a modern museum and cultural education facility in Alert

Bay. Their operations include the museum, an extensive art gallery and gift shop, group tours, and presentations by dance troupes. The facility also hosts international scholars, and supports researchers in a range of disciplines.

Key players

The 'Wi'la'mola Project is the business arm of the U'mista Cultural Society, a non-profit organization which holds the mandate to represent the cultural values and property of the Kwakwaka'wakw First Nation (KFN). The 'Wi'la'mola project serves both the KFN and the non-native population as a whole, with U'mista overseeing any cultural components of the business activity developments. The 'Wi'la'mola Project respectfully explores opportunities to use Kwakwaka'wakw culture to create employment, business development and economic benefits for the community. This initiative of the Kwakwaka'wakw First Nation is to nurture and steward the cultural heritage of the Kwakwaka-speaking people through education of both visitors and the community, is put into practice through the activities of the 'Wi'la'mola project.

More information

<http://www.umista.org/home/index.php>

Skidegate, Haida Gwaii, British Columbia

Overview

The Kaay Llnagaay Heritage Centre located at Kaay Llnagaay (Sea Lion Town), Skidegate, is a multi-million dollar cultural project. When completed, the Kaay Llnagaay Heritage Centre will present an integrated complex of learning, working and performance facilities. The centre aims to be “a place for nurturing Haida culture and sharing it with the rest of the world. A learning place to discover the cultural worlds within us, the natural and supernatural world around us and the connections between us all. A sacred place to honour our ancestors, the generations gone by. A teaching place to convey knowledge and skills, old and new, to the coming generations.”

The Centre includes teaching centres, a large performance area, an expanded museum, and a lodge for visitors.

Main Players

Skidegate Band Council

Funding provided by: the Province of British Columbia; Indian and Northern Affairs Canada; Parks Canada; Western Economic Diversification Canada; Canadian Heritage – Museum Assistance Program; Gwaii Trust Society, Haida Gwaii; Vancouver Foundation; and Skeena Native Development Society.

Key Results

In this area, commercial fishing and logging were once the main sources of employment but as natural resources have been depleted these industries have declined in importance. Haida art is world-renowned, and the Heritage Centre will be able to both provide local employment as well as showcase this art to the world. In this way, the museum is a well-crafted transitional opportunity for employment, driven by the local population.

More Information

<http://www.haidaheritagecentre.com/>

Hazelton, British Columbia

Population 1,350

Overview

The ‘Ksan Historical Village and Museum is located near Hazelton in northern BC. As a replicated ancient village, ‘Ksan illustrates many features of a historic Gitx̱san village, such as the houses that form a single line with each building facing the river, with the decorated fronts and totem poles visible from the water. The Village’s role is to illustrate the richness of Gitx̱san culture and history and also provide economic opportunities for First Nations people of the Upper Skeena River region. The collection of cultural objects is housed in what is called a *treasure house*, as the word *museum* implies “lifeless and unused items.”

Work began in the 1950s, as the Hazelton Mayor and the Library Association believed that the economic and social problems of Hazelton would diminish if all people, both First Nations and non-First Nations, understood the stature, richness, and sophistication of Gitx̱san society and culture. In the beginning financial support for the project was limited and progress was slow. Hazelton, a low-income area, had a limited tax base with a small population of 450 at this time. During this period, the members of the association began researching museum administration and operation, as well as Gitx̱san history and culture. The association had no thought of buying artifacts, but to obtain them on loan from their owners with the understanding that they could remove them from the proposed museum at any time when they were needed for use.

The ‘Ksan Performing Arts Group has worked with ‘Ksan Historical Village and Museum for over 28 years and continues to be a fundamental component of this institution. The ‘Ksan Performing Arts Group are cultural ambassadors for the Gitx̱san people. They have performed throughout the province, across Canada, and around the world.

Main Players

Agricultural and Rural Development Agency
Province of British Columbia
Hazelton Library Association
Hazelton Mayor Margaret Sargent

Key Lessons

The partnerships between the City, the Library, and the Band were key to coordinating funding efforts. As this was a project with a distinct regeneration goal, this partnership was essential to a sustainable regeneration of the whole community.

More Information

<http://www.ksan.org/html/arts.htm>

Chemainus, British Columbia

Population 5,000

Overview

Chemainus, on Vancouver Island's east shore, is an isolated town between a mountain range and the ocean, with a river cutting it off from the south and a major highway to the north. Mining, fishing, and forestry were the original industries, but similar to many small BC towns, these industries were not sustainable. As a mill town, Chemainus was dependent on the success of the mill, and in 1981 a recession in BC hit the resource sector very hard. When the Chemainus mill closed in 1983, 650 workers were laid off. The mill reopened two years later but with a major change in technology, which meant that only 145 workers were re-hired. But the town had already moved into a new industry – tourism. Artists stepped in to redefine the town.

During the time leading up to the mill closure, Chemainus was faced with the very real possibility of becoming the next BC ghost town. The fact that the town was off the main highway made it more vulnerable. Under the BC government of Bill Van der Zalm, community initiative grants were being developed to aid towns in revitalization projects. The City's then Mayor, Graham Bruce, presented the concept of a tourism strategy based on an outdoor mural project to the community. Chemainus was to be the first community to complete a revitalization, and also to become a world-famous example of how even a small town can create substantial change for survival. Known now as a "mural town," Chemainus has inspired many other small towns internationally to use arts and culture as a regenerative tool.

The Chemainus Theatre Festival began in 1993, as another key arts event in the town. This festival is a sister-organization to the Rosebud Theatre and School of the Arts, discussed below.

Key Players

BC Premier Bill Van der Zalm
Chemainus Mayor Graham Bruce

Lessons Learned

The actual creation of the murals was the "easy, fun ... and often the least expensive" part of this project, and needed to be incorporated into a complete economic development strategy for tourism. The overall strategy took considerable planning, research, and a dedicated group of people to initiate. The community used murals as a springboard for long-term commitment to tourism. Chemainus found it important to invest in a unique, creative product that became a partnership to serve and include the entire community. Chemainus remains one of the most successful projects of its kind, some 25 years later.

The Chemainus Murals have become a model for communities around the world to develop a culture-based economic development model that engages the community by exploring its history, its beauty, and its talents. While mural painting is not a new concept even in North America (Los Angeles is another example), as an economic development strategy it makes this small town's mural project unique, and the standard by which many communities followed suit.

More Information

<http://www.chemainus.com/>

Nelson, BC and area

Population approx 10,000

Overview

Nelson has earned a reputation as the #1 small arts town in Canada. Businesses throughout the city display art year-round in support of local artists, and the summer months feature a special festival to partner arts and business owners to turn local shops into galleries. Each month during the summer there is a show opening open to the public, with food, drinks, and live music. Other activities and attractions include both local and imported performances at the heritage Capitol Theatre, as well as at smaller venues in bars and restaurants. *Artwalk* rotates the work of 65-70 artists through 17 restaurants and shops, with a walking tour through downtown Nelson that draws thousands each year.

Also in Nelson, the Kootenay School of the Arts at Selkirk College (KSA) offers a two-year diploma in Art, Craft, and Design. Kootenay School of the Arts is dedicated to graduating students who can make a living through their professions in these media. In support of this goal, the school's curriculum emphasizes studio work and the faculty is made up of individuals who are, first and foremost, practicing artists and craftspeople.

The area around Nelson is also known for cultural activity. The annual Kaslo Jazz Festival is nearby, and the Shambhala rave in nearby Salmo River attracts 10,000 people each summer.

Main Players

Kootenay School of the Arts
Nelson and District Arts Council
Heritage Capitol Theatre
Nelson Visitor Centre

Rosebud, Alberta

Population 100-300 (seasonal)

Overview

Rosebud is a rural community located 100 km northeast of Calgary and 35 km southwest of Drumheller. The town literally supports one industry: a performing arts school and theatre. The Rosebud Theatre and Rosebud School of the Arts employs the entire population in one capacity or the other, from teachers to tech staff to performers to the tourism industry. Rosebud is visited by over 40,000 people every year.

European settlers began homesteading in Rosebud in 1883, laying the foundation for a strong farming and ranching community. The hamlet flourished in the early 1900s, reaching a population of 300 in the 1920s. By the early 1970s, however, the population dropped to less than 30, and abandoned buildings awaited demolition. But in 1973, LaVerne Erickson, a music and art teacher in Calgary, started Rosebud Camp of the Arts as a summer outreach

program for Calgary youth. This led directly to the founding in 1977 of the Rosebud Fine Arts High School. The school combined academics, arts, and work experience.

The school created an artistic hub in Rosebud. In 1986, Rosebud School of the Arts launched its post-secondary apprenticeship programme focused on theatre, music, and creative arts ministry training. In 1988, the Alberta Legislature passed the *Rosebud School of the Arts Act*, creating a Christian arts guild school. In 1998, the Canadian Badlands Performing Arts Summer School also began. In 2002-03, over 70 students from Alberta, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, the United States, and the Netherlands participated in the secondary and post-secondary programmes offered by Rosebud School of the Arts. The theater expanded in the 1990s with renovations to the main Opera House. Seating changed from “150 packed in on old church pews to 220 lounging in tiered-theatre seats.” A heating and air-conditioning system replaced the need to bring blankets in the winter and fans in the summer. Actors were given a larger stage with a full dressing room, and patrons were treated to a lobby complete with washrooms, running water, and a concession area.

In 1993, a sister organization, Chemainus Theatre Festival, opened on Vancouver Island. Much of the first staff as well as the first two shows came from Rosebud. It has now grown to the largest professional theatre on the Island, attracting over 60,000 people per year. RSA still oversees the Chemainus Internship Programme, also known as the Young Company.

Lessons Learned

For this community, one arts-based industry was enough to literally save the town. Community participation and a unique institution created a sustainable core regeneration project.

More information

<http://www.rosebudschoolofthearts.com/>
<http://www.rosebudtheatre.com/Default.aspx>

Strathcona County, Alberta

County population 71,986

Overview

Strathcona County is constructing a new community centre, opening in 2010. It will contain a new library on two floors, flexible indoor and outdoor spaces to accommodate a wide range of community activities, expanded and accessible space for Family and Community Services, new municipal space including meeting rooms and offices, and underground parking. Serving all Strathcona County residents, the Community Centre will become a year-round hub for community events, cultural activity, and learning. Its design and programming will reflect the communities’ mix of urban and rural character. The community is currently looking at having residents become involved in creating a “legacy art piece” to be included in the building.

The Centre is dedicated to bringing arts, culture, and heritage groups together to voice long-term space requirements and advocate for a facility to meet these needs. The first objective realized was a display area for culture at the Sherwood Park Mall. Exhibits in this display, located in the Library’s upper lobby, showcased the County’s rich cultural heritage for mall shoppers. Having envisioned a major cultural hub for the County, the Culture and Heritage

Association is pleased to see construction underway for the Community Centre as part of Centre in the Park, which will include a new home for the Library and also space for art.

The County also has an Arts, Culture and Heritage Community Investment Program, with granting programs for events, arts development, and community arts organizations. The County's Arts Acquisition program develops and maintains the County's permanent art collection. The Art Society of Strathcona County operates the Loft Gallery for member exhibitions and coordinates a community mural project.

Main Players

Strathcona County Library
Strathcona Art Society
Alberta Lottery Funding

Lessons Learned

As the community centre project is in progress lessons are not immediately evident.

Assiniboia, Saskatchewan

Population 2,300

Overview

The Shurniak Art Gallery houses founder Bill Shurniak's private collection of original paintings, sculptures, and artifacts from around the world. Opened in July 2005, the 8,000 square foot gallery has a landscaped courtyard and grounds featuring sculptures by Canadian artists Robert Davidson and Joe Fafard. With the opening of Shurniak Art Gallery on July 30, 2005, Assiniboia left its former unsophisticated small town image behind. The gallery became the most important tourist attraction in the area, attracting art lovers internationally and making the town an art mecca on the map of southern Saskatchewan.

The gallery features the works of A.J. Casson, A.Y. Jackson, Lawren Harris, Arthur Lismer, and Allen Sapp, among others. Contemporary Canadian and Saskatchewan artists are featured as part of rotating exhibits. The Assiniboia and District Arts Council has an office in the gallery building.

Although the art gallery has a high profile, Assiniboia still considers agriculture its main industry. The arts do not feature on the town's main website.

Main players

Founder Bill Shurniak

Key Results

In this community, it took one man's passion for art to create a completely new arts-oriented focal point for the town. The relatively small town of Assiniboia in rural Saskatchewan has suddenly become very important in the world of Canadian art.

Val Marie, Saskatchewan

Population 140

Overview

In August 1994, Val Marie hosted *Grasslands — Where Heaven Meets Earth*, a multi-disciplinary arts experience that drew upon the experiences and materials provided by local residents. This community-wide event is an example of how one event can bring together outsiders and locals, as well as cross-discipline performers and stimulate an revival of aesthetic and community awareness.

Main Players

The project involved support and participation by Common Weal Community Arts, the Art Gallery of Swift Current, the Swift Current Allied Arts Council, Grasslands National Park, Friends of the Grasslands, as well as choreographer Bill Coleman, visual artist Edward Poitras, musician Gordon Monahan, and dancers Margie Gillis, David Earle, Robin Poitras, Johanna Bundon, Katherine Oledski, Krista Solheim, Jennifer Dahl, Peter Trotzmer, Carol Prieur, and Laurence Lemieux. The event was supported by the Inter-Arts Office and the Dance Section of the Canada Council.

Coleman-Lemieux & Compagnie's *Dance in the Community* projects are specifically designed to bring professional artists into rural communities. The Val Marie project included much more than the final performance: the community saw contemporary music and dance workshops in Val Marie and Shaunavon; kite-making in the schools, coordinated by the Art Gallery of Swift Current; the creation of banners by 12 visual artists throughout southwest Saskatchewan; collaborative quilting production and the recording of quilters' stories for an art exhibit in the Prairie Wind & Silver Sage Museum; the construction of corral-style fencing along the main street of Val Marie as a symbol of a community drawn together in farming life; and children's finger-painting on salt-lick tubs decorated with local plant life.

The final performance was in the protected heritage site of Grasslands National Park. Around 600 audience members gathered at the entrance of the park, and followed a set route to the "venue." Along the way, dancers moved in and out of the landscape, and at the site, the audience found well-known Canadian dancer Margie Gillis standing in the doorway of an abandoned farmhouse. The dancers, audience, and landscape all had an equal role in the final performance.

Key Results

The former Mayor of Val Marie wrote this letter to the artists following the performance:

"...It seemed to have affected the consciousness of the local population – people are still awed at the event and now, 3 months later, it is still a major topic of conversation. Although it seemed a bit high-brow for us at the beginning, it turned out to be an event that made many people appreciate dance. Also, on a more practical level, our business (The Convent Country Inn) has been constantly busy since the dance, which will make it the best business year in the last seven years. I spoke with the owner of the local grocery store, Whitemud Grocery, and their business has been much busier than usual since the dance. We believe that it has somehow made people more community minded. The town itself, with the props that were left, is much more aesthetically pleasing and many of the local people have felt an intense pride in their village being picked for this event. It is very difficult to put a finger on what

exactly happened – maybe it was the energy that the dancers brought to the village – this may sound a bit off the wall, but something happened that has changed this town for the better...”

Prince Edward County, Ontario

Overview

Prince Edward County (PEC) is a rural municipality of 25,000 located south of Belleville, approximately midway between Toronto and Montreal. At the turn of the 21st century, a “creative economy” model took over from a resource and farming based economy. A formal cultural planning process took place in 2005, resulting in a municipal cultural plan. Creative industries are a major part of population retention and attraction (see *buildanewlife.ca*). A key strategy in PEC economic development is promoting The County as an “artistic haven” which will help to attract other “creatives” and will in turn generate economic growth.

Main Players

P.E.L.A. Institute for Rural Development
PEC Economic Development Office

Key Results

PEC is the focus of a series of “creative class” studies tracking the efforts of the county to use the “creative rural economy” strategy for revitalization.

Measured results from the Cultural Plan include: \$45 million in wine industry investment over seven years; 12 new wineries – 750 acres of grapes (from zero eight years ago); \$18 million per annum in wine sales (from zero eight years ago); \$50-\$85 million in projected wine sales five to seven years out – potentially doubling the agricultural GDP; building permits up 300% over seven years; \$150 million in incremental investment; a booming construction industry; tourism visits from 1999 to 2004 up 74% (225,000 to 500,000); a 168% increase in tourism spending, from \$25 million spent in 1999, to \$65 million in 2004, and expected to reach \$100 million by 2009; property assessment up \$750 million; \$20-30 million investment in downtown revitalization in Picton (population 3,000) over the last few years with major condominium, commercial, and retail developments, a new boutique hotel with culinary and Jazz Bar, new housing, and waterfront development; from a declining population (1996 – 2001 census) to a 2% rise (2001 – 2006); and currently over a half billion dollars in qualified investment leads (Baeker, 2008, p. 11).

A major study undertaken in 2008 for the Prince Edward/Lennox and Addington Community Future Development Corporation, *Growing the Creative Rural Economy in Prince Edward County*, addressed issues of human capital, innovation, and tourism in the context of the region’s large growth in these areas. The study includes many recommendations for further development focusing on ecological and community-based sustainability.

An earlier study published in 2005 by Brian Hrac addresses many similar trends. *Culture in the Countryside: A Study of Economic Development and Social Change in Prince Edward County, Ontario* addresses culture-based community economic development, the issues evident in Prince Edward County’s development, and the model’s potential for use as a case study by other communities.

Lessons Learned

Picton's Regent theatre – a 1919 heritage theatre with 1,100 seats – faced a major crisis in 2004. Toronto's Passe Murraile theatre company was putting on their second summer season and sales did not go well. Accordingly, the summer session was cancelled, and the theatre was forced to lay off its permanent staff. This "crisis" became a focal point for a community that depended on the economic spin-offs of the theatre, such as dinners out and pre-show shopping, but did not themselves buy tickets. This led to substantial community discussion about the role of the theatre, the role of programming, and the theatre's responsiveness to its local audience. The crisis also revealed that theatre also had not received much municipal support compared to other infrastructure projects, and faced huge operating costs. The community rallied for fundraisers and vocally voiced their support of the theatre, but stressed the need to provide programming not simply aimed at tourists, but at the local population.

Grand Argenteuil Quebec

Regional population 30,000

Résumé

La Route des Arts du grand Argenteuil est un projet géré par les artistes avec très peu de soutien externe. En 2003, le projet a même été presque autofinancé. Sur une période de quatre ans, ce groupe d'artistes est parvenu à plus que doubler le nombre d'ateliers ouverts au public, tripler le nombre des visites des ateliers et à englober la totalité de la région d'Argenteuil et de ses environs (distance du trajet augmenté de 250 km à presque 500 km). Selon les organisateurs, c'est particulièrement impressionnant puisque la région n'est pas reconnue particulièrement pour son offre culturelle. Nul doute que les citoyens sont de plus en plus attirés par la Route des Arts puisque la fréquentation des ateliers ne cesse d'augmenter. De plus, les citoyens apprécient le concours organisé par la Route des Arts. Les visiteurs sont invités à remplir un coupon de tirage dans chacun des ateliers. Les prix sont offerts par les marchands de la région. Par exemple, en 2003, une fin de semaine de deux jours pour six personnes dans un chalet au Domaine de la Nouvelle France à Wentworth Nord a été offerte.

La Route des Arts a permis une concertation entre les artistes, les municipalités et les institutions régionales. Ces dernières soutiennent la Route des arts par leurs connaissances professionnelles et leurs propres réseaux. Les organisateurs de la Route des Arts ont établi de bons contacts avec les musées locaux, l'Association touristique des Laurentides, la MRC Argenteuil, le CLD de la MRC Argenteuil, le CRD des Laurentides et le Conseil de la culture des Laurentides, ainsi qu'avec les municipalités de la région. La promotion d'Argenteuil comme destination touristique à caractère culturel s'inscrit à 100 % dans la démarche de promotion économique de la région. Les organisateurs ont constaté que le retour de la Route des arts comme activité annuelle a eu un impact important sur l'industrie touristique locale, soit sur les visiteurs ponctuels ou les vacanciers. Selon les artistes responsables de la Routes des Arts, ceux-ci contribuent au développement du tourisme régional, pas seulement dans une seule ville mais à travers une grande région, celle d'Argenteuil et de ses environs. En dépit des conditions défavorables, et de la concurrence féroce par rapport à d'autres projets populaires qui ont lieu pendant la même période, la Route des Arts a considérablement contribué au développement touristique de la région, d'autant plus que l'achalandage augmente d'année en année.

Résultats

Pour le milieu artistique, la Route des Arts est un succès stimulant. La fréquence des visites dans les ateliers a augmenté. La circulation des visiteurs dans tous les studios s'est élargie. La visibilité de l'événement dans les médias a été améliorée de beaucoup grâce aux journaux locaux.

Plus d'information

http://www.arts-ville.org/index.php?page=repertoire_dactions_culturelles_en_milieu_rural_fr&lang=fr

Amqui, Quebec

Population 5,000

Souper-gala Artquimédia – Résumé

Artquimédia est d'abord un concours ouvert à tous les artistes du territoire de la MRC La Matapédia dans les catégories arts visuels, arts littéraires et arts d'interprétation et ce, pour les artistes en formation, les artistes amateurs, les artistes professionnels et les groupes d'artistes. Ce concours se termine par la remise des prix à l'occasion du souper-gala annuel. Au cours de cette soirée, tous les artistes inscrits sont présents et font partie intégrante de la programmation de la soirée. Les artistes en arts visuels participent à l'exposition alors que les artistes en arts d'interprétation et en littérature font partie du spectacle. Cette activité se veut également une levée de fonds pour la Fondation Artquimédia vouée à la promotion et à l'éducation artistiques sur l'ensemble du territoire de la MRC La Matapédia. Le concours se tient du mois d'août au mois d'octobre et la soirée a lieu en novembre.

Le facteur déterminant qui a donné naissance au projet Artquimédia est l'éloignement de la région par rapport aux grands centres urbains et le peu de ressources disponibles pour favoriser le développement des arts et le soutien aux artistes. En région, il est plus difficile d'avoir accès à des musées, centres d'art, écoles de formation en musique, en danse, en théâtre, etc. Toutefois, dans la région de La Matapédia comme partout ailleurs, il y a de nombreuses personnes talentueuses qui ont besoin d'être encouragées à poursuivre leur démarche artistique.

Financier par entreprises privées et commerces, Ville d'Amqui, ministère de la Culture et des Communications, député, centre local de développement (CLD).

Résultats

Pour les artistes, les retombées sont nombreuses. D'abord, ils se font connaître par participation au souper-gala Artquimédia, ils sont souvent invités à participer spectacles et d'autres activités culturelles. L'encouragement d'Artquimédia à poursuivre leur démarche artistique et incite les jeunes à s'inscrire à des cours spécialisés dans le domaine des arts. Certains artistes ont même été découverts à l'occasion d'un souper-gala (par exemple : Geneviève Charest, Alexandre Valade). Par ailleurs, le souper-gala Artquimédia permet à l'ensemble de la population d'assister à une qualité. Chaque année, l'événement fait salle comble (450 personnes) et, selon les présentés dans une salle plus grande, le souper-gala réunirait une assistance plus nombreuse. On propose, lors de cette soirée, une exposition des artistes inscrits en arts visuels, un souper gastronomique de cinq services, un spectacle des artistes inscrits en arts d'interprétation et en littérature ainsi que la remise des bourses et des agates aux récipiendaires. Il s'agit également

d'une belle visibilité pour la municipalité. Amqui a la réputation d'être une vie culturelle très intéressante, une ville vivante où il fait bon vivre.

Plus d'information

http://www.arts-ville.org/index.php?page=repertoire_dactions_culturelles_en_milieu_rural_fr&lang=fr

Bouctouche, New Brunswick

Population 2,380

Overview

Located on a small island in the town of Bouctouche, New Brunswick, Le Pays de la Sagouine is a reproduction mid-century Acadian village inspired by the town's famous novelist, Antonine Maillet, and her most celebrated character, La Sagouine. The village features summer programs of theatre, music, comedy, and dance, allowing visitors to discover not only the tales of the Acadian heroine, La Sagouine, but also the unique Acadian culture of the region.

Maillet, who was awarded the prestigious Prix Goncourt in 1979, was approached in the 1980s for permission to create a tourist attraction based on her book. Federal, provincial, and municipal negotiation was needed but finally the site was selected and Le Pays de la Sagouine opened in 1992. The site accommodates eight to ten professional actors, as well as several house bands and a popular dinner theatre featuring authentic Acadian cuisine.

Originally, there was local skepticism about the project. The character of La Sagouine is portrayed as poor and uneducated, which locals thought would reflect badly on their culture. The development of a cultural facility in an isolated community was questioned, as was the need for another restaurant in the area, which was seen as competition by existing businesses.

Main Players

Le Pays de la Sagouine was a municipally driven project, developed originally as a tourism initiative. Prior to its development, explains Executive Director Paul LeBlanc, the cultural scene in Bouctouche was virtually non-existent, and the town's most popular attraction was the local bingo hall. Since its inception, however, the site has not only given an identity to the community, but has also provided a source of entertainment for local residents. It was in part because of local needs – local residents wanted to see new additions to the program – that the facility began to include several more actors.

Key Results

According to LeBlanc, the site has developed into much more than just a tourist attraction: "Now we are as much a community attraction, with locals buying season passes and coming to the site dozens of times per season. And let's not forget that the facility has become a very important economic engine in the region." The development of Le Pays de la Sagouine has had a profound impact on the community of Bouctouche and the province of New Brunswick. A recent economic impact study found that, as one of the most prominent tourist attractions in the province, the site has contributed significantly to the economic growth of the entire region. "Everything in the town has come to revolve around La Sagouine," says LeBlanc. Before Le Pays de la Sagouine was built, there were perhaps a handful of bed and breakfasts

in the entire town, but now there are dozens. Other significant tourist attractions have also opened in the region. Business owners, who were initially concerned over the construction of a competing business area, now credit the site for their increased success.

More information

<http://www.sagouine.com/>

<http://www.cultureandcommunities.ca/resources/cultural-facility-profiles/cultural-spaces-community-impacts/le-pays-de-la-sagouine.html>

Cape Breton, Nova Scotia

Island population 147,454

Overview

The Celtic Colours International Festival is a major event for communities in Cape Breton, set apart from other festivals as it incorporates locations across the island. Communities around Cape Breton Island host concerts and workshops at a time when the fall leaves are at their most brilliant and travelling around the island offers stunning views. The 200-year-old heritage of the communities provides context for a celebration of living Celtic culture.

In many of these communities, the local fire hall, parish hall, or community centre has hosted musical events for generations, in some cases literally moving the fire trucks out of the hall to accommodate a dance. Venues for Celtic Colours are all prominent community gathering places, and vary from an 18th century reconstructed French Chapel to brand new performance facilities to community halls.

A major area of growth for the Festival in 2008 was in education programming and community events with more than 265 events being offered in addition to the 47 concerts. Educational programming ranged from workshops and lectures to square dances and community suppers, reflecting many aspects of the local culture. Festival organizers worked with over 70 non-profit community groups. More than 10,000 people, both locals and visitors, attended these events.

Main Players

The Festival is supported by local business sponsorships, municipal, provincial, national, and international government agencies, and media and businesses partnerships. It is run by a board of directors.

Key Results

The 12th annual festival (2008) created a great season for local businesses, generating an economic impact of \$4.5 million. In spite of a decline in tourism across the country, the festival sold 18,600 tickets, which is comparable to sales over the past few years. "Last year was a banner year and we almost reached 20,000 tickets, but 18-19,000 is our normal range so we're delighted to be holding our own when so many events are experiencing major declines," said Dr. Jacquelyn Scott, Chair of the Board of Directors. The audience was 50% local, 50% visitors, which indicates a long-term vitality for the festival.

More Information

<http://www.celtic-colours.com/index.php>

Canning, Nova Scotia

Population 859

Overview

The Ross Creek Centre for the Arts is a unique institution in Canada, bringing together the best in arts education for youth with community and professional artist programs. The Centre is a research and development centre for the arts of all disciplines and cultures and is proud to help facilitate the development of new art from around the world in wonderful facilities on a picturesque farm in rural Nova Scotia.

On 186 acres of farm and forest overlooking the Bay of Fundy, the Centre offers programs and facilities for artists and students of the visual arts (painting, sculpture, ceramics, textiles, multi-media, and new media), performing arts (music, dance, theatre, opera), literary arts (fiction, non-fiction, poetry, journalism), architecture, film (fiction, journalism, documentary, animation), and fine craft (jewellery, fabric, pottery, etc.). Classes for children through adults are offered, at varying levels of experience. A program for aboriginal art, mainly Mi'kmaq, includes community and youth programs. Ross Creek also has two performances spaces, two galleries, three visual arts studios, and an outdoor stage, and offers professional artist residencies at the Centre's multi-disciplinary artist colony.

The founders of the Centre wanted to create the opportunity for Nova Scotia artists to return or remain at home rather than leave for Montreal or Toronto to pursue their careers – as the founders originally had to do. Modelled on the Banff Centre for the Arts, the provision of a dedicated creation and residency space was needed in the area. “In the same way a scientist needs appropriate facilities in which to do their research, I would say that artists need that as well,” said co-founder Chris O'Neill.

Main players

Founders Chris O'Neill and Ken Schwartz

More Information

<http://www.artscentre.ca/>

Town of Bear River, Nova Scotia

Overview

Many Bear River residents are visiting artists who put down roots, resulting in a thriving community of artists. Natural beauty, together with a peaceful setting, contributes to the inspiration of the talented craftspeople who make up this village.

Heritage and artisan and sustainability initiatives characterize the town. Known as the “village on stilts,” Bear River boasts a unique business district – the historic buildings huddled in the downtown area have been constructed upon wooden stilts, suspending them over parceled portions of the river's edge. The shopping district is characterized by artisan and craft shops.

Development initiatives include eco-friendly development such as the existing solar aquatics treatment plant, as well as a vineyard project. The preservation of wooden vessels is an important part of the area heritage.

Approximately one mile from the heart of the village can be found the Bear River First Nations Community Heritage and Cultural Centre, an interpretive centre depicting the native Mi'kmaw culture.

More information

<http://www.bearriver.ca/>

Brief community initiative summaries

Elora, Ontario

Population 3,800

Elora is known as a historic village and artisan centre, with a strong tourism base. The Elora Festival is widely known. The town has been called a “heritage shopping village” with such a successful focus on heritage and artisan shopping centres that it tended to destroy the authentic in favour of the tourist-friendly version of an artist’s community (Mitchell & Coghill, 2000). Elora’s strengths lie in the conversion of major historical buildings into modern tourist amenities, without sacrificing their historical qualities, as well as the promotion of its arts, music, and literary festivals.

Eastend, Saskatchewan

Population 570

Since the discovery of “Scotty,” Canada’s most complete T.rex, thousands of tourists have flocked to the Valley of Hidden Secrets to view the rare collection of ancient artifacts. Eastend also features the site of Crazy Horses’ 1876 encampment, a historical N.W.M.P. post, Chocolate Peak, historical Chimney Coulee, and the scenic viewpoint of Jones Peak. AGES (Artisans Guild of Eastend and surrounding area) showcases artists in the southwest corner of Saskatchewan, gives experience to starting artists, builds a collective arts community, holds workshops, and features artists monthly.

Claybank, Saskatchewan

The Claybank Brick Plant is a national and provincial historic site. The plant operated from 1914 to 1989 and was known for producing firebricks from the rare refractory clay deposits nearby. It also produced fine quality face bricks for several significant buildings including the Bessborough Hotel in Saskatoon and the Château Frontenac in Quebec City. The large complex features over 20 structures, including a visitor centre and gift shop in the former bunkhouse. Co-operatively owned and managed by the Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation and the Claybank Brick Plant Historical Society, the complex is open to the public annually from mid-May to Labour Day and is a significant tourist draw.

Kensington, Prince Edward Island

Population 1,485

The annual Indian River Festival is a major tourist attraction for this area. In the 1970s and 1980s, the St. Mary's Church, now home to the Indian River Festival, was in need of major renovations. At that time, suggestions were made to tear down the church as the parish alone could not afford the needed work. With the launch of the "Save St. Mary's" campaign in 1987, area churches, businesses, individuals, families, and other groups raised enough funding to complete the necessary renovations within 3 years. One of the campaign initiatives was the *Sundays in the Summer* concert series, which has proved to be extremely popular and a successful source of revenue. Originally run by a group of volunteers, in order to expand the festival the Indian River Festival Association Inc. was formed in 1996 as a not-for-profit organization. The Association's mandate is to present fine music appropriate to the Church, and to aid in the continuing upkeep and restoration of St. Mary's. The festival is sponsored by the PEI-NB Confederation Bridge.

Norris Point, Woody Point, and Rocky Harbour, Newfoundland

All three of these communities are located near Gros Morne National Park and the Tablelands, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and use the natural and heritage features of the area to their advantage in tourism efforts. Gros Morne was established in 1972, giving these former fishing towns a new major industry – tourism. Festivals and tourist attractions have been developed since that time. Norris Point boasts the Trails, Tales and Tunes Festival, while Woody Point hosted "Writers at Woody Point" in 2006, an event that was sold out and featured major Atlantic authors such as Ann-Mare Macdonald and Wayne Johnson. Historically, Woody Point was the main commercial hub of the region, surrounded by fishing and logging settlements. Rocky Harbour is located in the heart of Gros Morne and is the largest community in the park. Tourism is now the major focus of the community's economy, which was historically based in fishing and forestry, like the others in the area.

Répertoire d'actions culturelles en milieu rural, developed by Les arts et la ville

This collection contains 74 profiles of cultural projects and initiatives in rural areas:

Intitulé de l'action culturelle	Municipalité
Maison de nos aïeux et Maison Drouin	Sainte-Famille
Animation Baie-Saint-Paul	Baie-Saint-Paul
Les Antichambres du livre	Baie-Comeau et ses environs
Centre d'archives régional de Portneuf	MRC de Portneuf
Route des Arts du grand Argenteuil	MRC Argenteuil
Artistes en fête	Sainte-Flavie
Souper-gala Artquimédia	Amqui
Semaine des arts du cirque	Îles-de-la-Madeleine
Automne en chansons et les Trésors de la terre	Saint-Eugène-de-Grantham
Balades culturelles	MRC Beauharnois-Salaberry
De la bibliothèque à la maison de la culture	Esprit-Saint et Saint-Marcellin
Journées traditionnelles festival Blues Grass	New Richmond
Les Casseux d'veillées	Baie-Sainte-Catherine et Tadoussac
Centre d'interprétation de la Côte-de-Beaupré	Château-Richer
Circuit des arts Memphrémagog	MRC Memphrémagog
Circuits photo-découverte	MRC de Coaticook
Circuit patrimonial et fresque historique	Saint-Donat
Bibliothèque Françoise-Maurice	Coaticook
La créativité en héritage	MRC L'Île-d'Orléans
Symposium des arts de la rue de Danville	Danville
Découvertes de la chanson de Magog	Magog
École de musique du Témiscouata	Témiscouata
Symposium Une époque en art	Saint-Basile-le-Grand
Mouvement ESSARTS	Saint-Pie-de-Guire
Espace Félix-Leclerc	Saint-Pierre de l'île d'Orléans
Festival de théâtre amateur d'Esprit-Saint	Esprit-Saint
Festi Rock de Richmond	Richmond

Intitulé de l'action culturelle	Municipalité
Fête de la forêt, un modèle à suivre	Saint-Eugène-de-Ladrière
Gaspésie : Terre et mer d'accueil et de culture	MRC Bonaventure, MRC La Haute-Gaspésie, MRC Avignon, MRC Le Rocher-Percé, MRC La Côte-de-Gaspé
La Grange à Dîme	Sainte-Flavie
Le Printemps des Artistes	MRC du Granit
Festival international Contes en Îles	Îles-de-la-Madeleine
Inventaire du patrimoine de la Côte-de-Beaupré	MRC La Côte-de-Beaupré
Symposium Les ISLOMANES	Îles-de-la-Madeleine
Festival des Jardins sur la Baie	New Richmond
Jardins d'écriture au pays de Maria Chapdelaine	Péribonka
Centre régional d'animation du patrimoine oral de Lanaudière	Saint-Jean-de-Matha
Biennale internationale du lin de Portneuf	MRC de Portneuf
Société d'histoire et de généalogie de Louiseville	Louiseville
Festival des artisans de Sainte-Marcelline	Sainte-Marcelline
Seigneurie Mauvide-Genest	Saint-Jean de l'Île d'Orléans
Mégashow en plein air	Sainte-Sabine
Concours Le Mérite architectural	Îles-de-la-Madeleine
Les productions Cour des miracles	Lachute
Moulin du Portage	Lotbinière
Les Murmures de la Ville	Mont-Joli
Les Muses, le printemps culturel à Baie-Saint-Paul	Baie-Saint-Paul
Nos maisons, une histoire de vie	MRC Rimouski-Neigette
Festival Orford	Orford
Parc maritime de Saint-Laurent	Saint-Laurent de l'Île d'Orléans
Moulin du Petit-Pré	Château-Richer
Café-spectacle La Pierre Angulaire	Saint-Élie
Festival Saint-Zénon-de-Piopolis	Piopolis
Les Pique-niques chantants	New Richmond

Intitulé de l'action culturelle	Municipalité
Centre d'interprétation du patrimoine de Plaisance	Plaisance
Politique culturelle de la MRC de Nicolet-Yamaska	MRC Nicolet-Yamaska
Tournée des ateliers d'artistes du Pontiac	MRC du Pontiac
Programme de restauration patrimoniale	Saint-Joseph de Beauce
Route de la Nouvelle-France	MRC La Côte-de-Beaupré
Ruralys, Centre d'expertise et d'animation en patrimoine rural	La Pocatière
Chanson en fête de Saint-Ambroise	Saint-Ambroise
Centre culturel du Vieux Presbytère de Sainte-Flavie	Sainte-Flavie
Salon des artisans	Saint-Basile-le-Grand
Service d'aide-conseil en rénovation patrimoniale (SARP)	Saguenay – Lac-Saint-Jean
Salle de spectacle de Sept-Îles	Sept-Îles
Symposium de peinture de Saint-Germain de Kamouraska	Saint-Germain de Kamouraska.
Symposium de peinture itinérant	MRC La Matapédia
Table sectorielle culture de la MRC de Nicolet-Yamaska	MRC Nicolet-Yamaska
Festival de chanson et d'humour Le Tremplin	Dégelis
Maison Vézina	Boischatel
Village gaspésien de l'héritage britannique	New Richmond
Cap-à-l'Aigle, Village des Lilas et les Jardins du cap à l'Aigle	La Malbaie
Concours Jeunes cinéastes	MRC Beauharnois-Salaberry
Comité consultatif d'urbanisme de Kamouraska	Kamouraska

Nancy Duxbury, PhD

Nancy Duxbury is an Adjunct Professor in the School of Communication at Simon Fraser University, Vancouver. From September 2005 to Fall 2008 she was the Executive Director of the Centre of Expertise on Culture and Communities, a major research and networking initiative on cultural infrastructure in Canadian cities and communities. Prior to that, she was Director of Research of the Creative City Network of Canada and Cultural Planning Analyst at the City of Vancouver's Office of Cultural Affairs. She is a former member of Metro Vancouver's Regional Culture Committee, the Advisory Council of the Canadian Cultural Observatory, and Statistics Canada's National Advisory Committee on Culture Statistics. She holds a doctorate in Communication from Simon Fraser University. Her research has examined Canadian cultural policy, municipal involvement in cultural development, cultural infrastructure, cultural indicators, and Canadian book publishing.

Heather Campbell

Heather Campbell grew up in New Brunswick, and lived and worked in Montreal and Toronto before moving to Vancouver in September 2008. With a background in freelance writing and public relations, she became immersed in the arts world as the Director of Marketing, Development and Arts Education for the Canadian Children's Dance Theatre in Toronto. She is very happy to continue her work in the cultural community as the administrator of the Dancer Transition Resource Centre – BC office, while attending Simon Fraser University in a post-degree program in communications, and working as researcher with the Centre for Policy Studies on Culture and Communities. Heather has a strong interest in Canadian cultural policy and its effect on creativity, communication, and communities.

Developing and Revitalizing Rural Communities Through Arts and Creativity:

AUSTRALIA

Kim Dunphy
Cultural Development Network
Victoria, Australia

Prepared for the Creative City Network of Canada, March 2009

“Don't you ever, ever, ever let that gallery close.”

- Local restaurateur to former Lord Mayor of Bendigo and gallery board member Rod Fyffe, after the spectacular success of a special exhibition



Garma Festival of Indigenous Culture, Arnhem Land, Northern Territory

Photo: **Garma Festival of indigenous Culture, Arnhem Land, Northern Territory: Re-storying indigenous culture for indigenous and non-indigenous people**

Yolngu culture in northeast Arnhem Land – a heartland of Aboriginal culture and land rights – is among the oldest living cultures on earth, stretching back more than 40,000 years. The Garma Festival is a celebration of this Yolngu cultural inheritance, designed to encourage the practice, preservation, and maintenance of traditional dance (bunggul), song (manikay), art, and ceremony. In addition to the cultural festival, Garma also provides a significant cultural exchange event, a key educational forum, and an award-winning model for authentic Indigenous tourism. *See Case Studies.*

Quotation: Quoted in *The Age* newspaper. <http://www.theage.com.au/national/gallery-fashions-a-stylish-reputation-with-smashhit-show-20090321-951u.html?skin=text-only>, accessed March 22, 2009

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The project was conducted by the Centre for Policy Studies on Culture and Communities at Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, BC.

The project papers are available on the Creative City Network of Canada website: www.creativecity.ca

Abstract

This paper explores the contribution of the arts and creativity to the development and revitalization of rural and remote communities in Australia. A search of the Australian literature indicates that arts and creative initiatives are significant for the development of rural and remote communities in the economic, environmental, social, and cultural domains. The “creative industry” model is particularly dominant in research investigating economic impacts of arts and creative initiatives, while a community cultural development approach is reflected in literature and activity that seeks or values social outcomes, including health and well being, social inclusion, and educational achievements. Also examined are arguments that ascribe value to the cultural dimension in its own right, in which the intrinsic value of arts and creativity for rural and remote communities is recognized. This view leads to the consideration that the economy should support arts and creativity rather than the other way around.

Factors that seem pivotal in building long-term sustainability for arts and creativity in rural communities include:

- Appreciation of local culture, history and heritage, local people, assets and characteristics;
- Enthusiastic local leadership, positive attitudes, local entrepreneurship and investment; and
- Right timing and a focus on retaining young people through employment, recreational, and educational initiatives.

The research examined for this paper points to numerous factors that might support initiatives in other communities. The most fundamental of these is the necessity of government commitment (at all levels) to the value of cultural dimension in planning and public policy. Other factors include the need for recognition of the value of local cultural product and practices, more support for arts in communities, especially through networks of regional arts development officers and assistance for volunteers (including training), and reduction of bureaucratic obstacles. Also suggested are better funding programs, including long-term investment and less onerous application processes, as well as data collection about arts activities and outcomes at a local level.

Résumé

Cet article se penche sur la contribution des arts et de la créativité à l'essor et à la revitalisation des collectivités rurales et éloignées, en Australie. Un examen de la documentation australienne révèle que les arts et les initiatives créatives sont déterminants pour l'essor des collectivités rurales et éloignées, tant dans les secteurs économique, environnemental et social que culturel. Le modèle des « industries créatives » prévaut dans la recherche portant sur les retombées économiques des arts et des initiatives créatives, alors que l'angle du développement culturel communautaire est plus présent dans la documentation et sous-tend les activités qui privilégient ou qui valorisent la dimension sociale tels la santé et le bien-être, l'inclusion sociale et le rendement académique. Par ailleurs, cet article fait également état d'arguments qui revendiquent l'importance de la dimension culturelle à part entière, et qui reconnaissent la valeur intrinsèque des arts et de la créativité pour les collectivités rurales et éloignées. Cette perspective donne lieu à un point de vue selon lequel l'économie devrait appuyer les arts et la créativité, et non l'inverse.

Parmi les facteurs qui semblent décisifs pour assurer la vitalité à long terme des arts au sein des collectivités rurales, notons :

- la reconnaissance de la culture locale, de son histoire et de son patrimoine, de ses habitants, de ses biens et de ses particularités;
- un leadership local inspiré, une attitude positive, la présence de l'entrepreneuriat et des investissements locaux;
- une bonne synchronisation et des efforts ciblés pour retenir les jeunes, en leur offrant de l'emploi, des loisirs et des occasions d'apprentissage.

La recherche effectuée dans le cadre de cet article révèle de nombreux facteurs qui pourraient servir à appuyer les initiatives mises de l'avant dans d'autres collectivités. Parmi ceux-ci, le plus indispensable demeure l'engagement des gouvernements de tous les échelons, à privilégier la dimension culturelle au sein de leur planification et de l'élaboration de leurs politiques publiques. Parmi les autres facteurs qui comptent, notons la valorisation des pratiques et des produits culturels locaux, un appui communautaire accru au secteur des arts locaux, plus particulièrement par l'entremise de réseaux de gestionnaires responsables du développement régional des arts, ainsi que la mise en place de mesures d'appui à l'intention des bénévoles (notamment de la formation), et un allègement de la bureaucratie. Par ailleurs, on y propose également la mise en place de programmes de financement plus adéquats, notamment par le biais d'investissements à long terme et de modalités de demandes moins contraignantes, ainsi que la collecte de données concernant les activités artistiques et leur portée locale.

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Developing and Revitalizing Rural Communities Through Arts and Creativity:

AUSTRALIA

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1. Introduction

1.1. Definition of *rural* and *remote*

For this paper, two different characteristics were used to determine which communities could be considered *rural* and *remote*, and therefore relevant for consideration: population density and access to services. Population density is the main consideration of the internationally recognised OECD definition, with regions considered *rural* if more than 50% of the people live where the population density is less than 150 persons per square kilometre (OECD, 1994). In contrast, the Australian ARIA (Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia) considers remoteness in terms of the distance a person must travel to access services (Australasia Economics, 2004). The communities this paper will primarily consider are those that could be considered rural or remote according to either of these definitions, although some reference will be made to larger regional centres.

1.2. Issues for rural and remote Australia

Most citizens of Australia live in metropolitan centres heavily concentrated along the southern and eastern coast. However, one-third of Australians live in rural and remote areas (ABS, 2001a), of which 29% are in regional areas and 3% in remote areas. In total, more than 6.7 million Australians live and work in non-metropolitan Australia (AIHW, 2008). Figure 1 portrays Australia according to ABS remoteness categories.¹

The successful functioning of Australia's society and economy depends on rural and remote areas, for it is there that much of the food, water, oxygen, and resources on which the nation relies, are drawn. While a great deal of land beyond the coastal fringe of Australia is

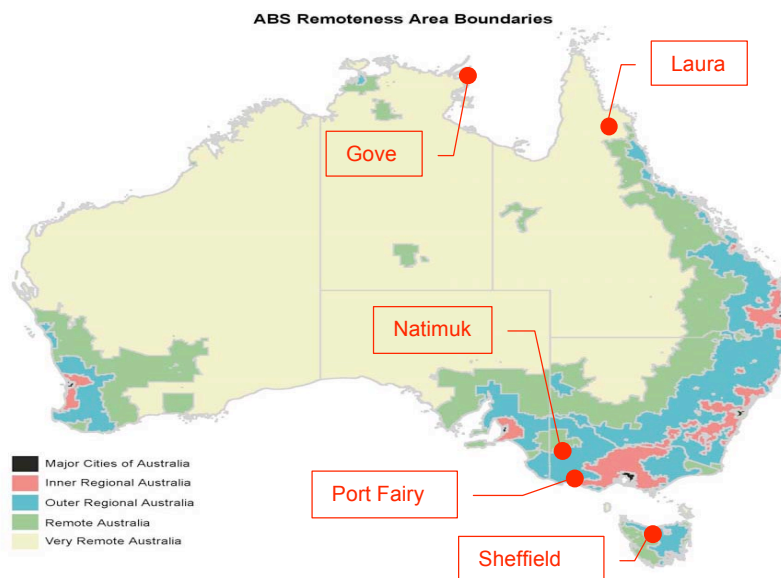
¹ [http://pandora.nla.gov.au/pan/44059/20041119-0000/www.oipc.gov.au/publications/KeyIndicatorsReport/15AttC\(ARIA\).pdf](http://pandora.nla.gov.au/pan/44059/20041119-0000/www.oipc.gov.au/publications/KeyIndicatorsReport/15AttC(ARIA).pdf)

unhabitable or desert, the rest is comprised of small communities within vast areas of wheat, sheep and cattle farms, timber plantations, and in areas with rainfall and irrigation, crop farms, orchards, and vineyards. The current mining boom has led to a surge in economic opportunities and development in remote areas. New industries, with much scope for development, include energy production through windfarming and carbon fixing initiatives such as tree plantations. Future as yet underdeveloped possibilities include desalination plants, carbon geosequestration, and solar energy harvesting.

Despite the vital contribution of rural and remote regions of Australia to the nation's survival, many commentators recognize a crisis faced by these communities (Dunn & Koch, 2006). Issues considered include stagnant or declining standards of living in rural Australia – including income, health, education, aged care, access to services, infrastructure, and housing (Sarantakos, 1998; Mills & Brown, 2004). Rural and remote communities experience disadvantage, by definition through their reduced access to goods and services, but also in employment opportunities and income. They include some of Australia's lowest socio-economic areas and have lower overall education achievement. Very remote areas have the lowest levels of school completion, with 48% of the population leaving school at Year 10 or earlier (AIHW, 2008).

Many rural areas are experiencing declining populations, caused in part by the “brain drain” of young people to cities (Alston & Kent, 2001). This in turn exacerbates the ageing of communities (Mission Australia, 2006). Indigenous people, who are more concentrated in rural and remote regions, experience very significant disadvantage, with health and social indicators considerably lower than for the Australian population as a whole (NACCHO, 2007; ABS, 2008). Increased proportions of younger Indigenous people live in smaller towns and remote areas with lower living standards and less opportunity (Mission Australia, 2006). Also making a negative impact are loss of social and financial capital, the “rationalisation” of both public and private services (Collits, 2000), and economic restructuring and policy reform (Baum, O'Connor & Stimson, 2005; Tonts & Atherley, 2005).

Figure 1. ABS Remoteness Area Boundaries



Dots indicate locations of case studies.

Economic, social, and environmental changes affecting Australian agriculture have led to concern for the sustainability of family farming, and rural communities can no longer expect economic security and sustainability from traditional agricultural enterprise (Rogers & Walker, 2005). The disastrous outcomes of climate change are being experienced most deeply in regional and remote areas, when lack of rainfall, reduced riverflows, soil salinity, increased temperatures, and related disasters – like the unprecedented bushfires in rural Victoria in early 2009 – contribute to a struggle for existence that impacts whole communities.

2. The contribution of arts and creativity to rural and remote communities in Australia

As a result of all these considerations, the well-being of people living in rural Australia has become an issue of major national significance. Creative solutions are necessary. Commentators such as Keller (2000) suggest that small rural communities will need to “create” a new future – embracing change and adopting new forms of innovation – if they are to survive or prosper. Many writers recognize the possible contribution of the arts to the revitalization or re-imagining of these communities (Smiles, 2006; Dunn & Koch, 2006).

There has been, until relatively recently, an absence of thorough research in this field as noted by authors including Williams (1995), Matarasso (1997), Kingma (2002), and Mills & Brown (2004). An inquiry into the impact of the arts in regional Western Australia concluded that there is a tendency for government to underestimate the importance of the arts, which is reflected and exacerbated by the lack of empirical data at a regional level (Government of Western Australia, 2004). This finding stresses the need for research into the arts and its contribution to the social needs of rural people on a national level (Marceau & Davidson, 2004). Smiles (2006) comments that most research on social impact has not been applicable to rural and remote areas because they necessitate highly specific models, partnerships, and strategies.

However, there is evidence of a growing reversal of that trend, commensurate with the increased interest in evaluation of the contribution of the arts to many areas of human experience. Research on arts and cultural development in regional and rural communities is being undertaken all around Australia by researchers from different disciplines and settings. Economic geographer Chris Gibson from the University of Wollongong, New South Wales, and social ecologist Martin Mulligan at RMIT University, Victoria, have been leading figures, approaching the issues from totally different perspectives. Other research has been instigated by governments, notably that of Western Australia, and arts organizations, particularly Regional Arts Australia.

Regional Arts Australia’s paper, *Cultural Development in Rural and Remote Areas*, provides a discussion and analysis of an annotated list of resources and approaches to definitions of *rural* and *remote* (Smiles, 2006). This document responds to the interest of arts agencies for information about how the arts support, affect, and shape rural and remote communities and how the role of the arts in sustainable cultural, social, and economic development is being explored.

Regional Arts Australia was also the driving force, with the Australia Council, of *National Directions: Regional Arts* (Dunn & Koch, 2006), a research project that explored issues around the development and maintenance of a viable regional arts industry and a vibrant cultural life. This study involved a nationwide consultation with Australians from regional areas concerning the nature, challenges, and opportunities of their work in and aspirations for the arts in their communities and towns. It revealed

a landscape of contrasts as wide as the country itself: some pastures rich, some seared; resources plenty, resources poor; some work rewarded, some fruitless; hope held and hope lost. Above all, it resonates with the voice of people who are united in winning a fair “share”, in applying their resourcefulness and to bringing the benefits of the arts within reach of their families and communities. A constant thread of belief in those benefits runs through the report with participants’ references to identity, opportunity, confidence, place, future, resilience, community, engagement, ownership, sustainability and so on. These are people who need no convincing that the arts “can make a difference”. (Dunn & Koch, 2006)

The following summary of the literature will be examined within a four-pillar framework (Hawkes, 2001) that considers arts and creative initiatives in rural and remote Australia with respect to the economic, social, environmental, and cultural dimensions of public policy and planning.

2.1. The contribution of arts and creativity to economic viability

Many authors have framed the contribution of arts to rural regeneration in terms of economic outcome. Those taking this approach have predominantly been economists and economic geographers, like Chris Gibson from the University of Wollongong and Jane Andrew from the National Institute of Economic and Industry Research in South Australia. Local government has long been driven by economic considerations, as exemplified by the commissioning of a report that investigated the economic contribution of the arts to the local area by small regional shire of Glenelg in western Victoria (Campbell, 2007). This report and others indicate that the arts can contribute significantly to local economies, and is valued and valuable for this reason. Some detailed research findings appear below.

Tresize (2007) reports that active investment and strategic support of the arts in regional areas can result in the return of the investment three times over. Job creation is a major aspect of this (Kingma, 2003a; Anwar McHenry, 2009), with arts generating between 6% of the total region employment and up to 22% of total non-farm employment (Tresize, 2007). Other benefits include greater productivity of businesses (Kingma, 2003a) and increased tourism (McHenry, 2009). Cultural industries are making a significant and growing contribution to employment and production in regional areas, and Western Australians are spending an increasing amount of their household income on cultural activities (Community Development and Justice Standing Committee, 2004).

Creative industries is a framework around which much research interest is being generated, embracing the concept that some arts and creative businesses have the capacity to be self-funding or contribute to the large economy. These are “industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property” (Department for Culture

Media and Sport, 2001, p. 5). A research project about creative industries in Darwin, which is both a capital city and extremely remote in terms of its proximity to the rest of the Australian population, affirms the major role that the creative industries can play in building and sustaining vibrant communities. This includes their function as magnets for small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs), talented employees, and extensive networks that value-add in otherwise isolated areas and contribute to regional regeneration and reputation building (Lea et al., 2009).

The following examples indicate the variety of economic contributions of arts activity in regional areas, ranging from income of workers associated with the arts programs and tourists to provision of local employment. Campbell (2007) identified that cultural heritage attractions were the major factor in attracting tourists to the rural regions of Portland and Heywood in Victoria, while in Wangaratta, Victoria, the 2008 Festival of Jazz attracted an estimated 32,000 visitors to the town over the four days of the Festival². Muir (2003) examined the positive economic impact of new cultural facilities on regional towns. In Maryborough, in rural Queensland, touring performances to that regional town in 2001-02 resulted in an estimated 2,660 cast and crew-nights being purchased, at an average of \$110 per person per night.

A study into the screen industry of the Northern Rivers region of New South Wales concluded that 7,280 people, or 6.1% of the labour force, were employed in the creative industries there. An additional 1,069 people worked as core volunteers and 1,525 people worked in support roles; and 6,220 students were involved, making the total number of all people involved in the creative industries in the region 16,000. Eighteen screen producers recorded a combined annual expenditure of \$7 million, with \$3.6 million being spent directly in the region in 2005, and employed around 223 people, with 110 of these being locals (Henkel, n.d).

While these indications do indicate a significant contribution of arts to economic outcomes, other factors are also given priority by researchers and practitioners in other disciplines. Hawkes (2001) describes the growing awareness of wide range of alternative ways of viewing and analysing the performance of a society, with these new frameworks based on a consciousness about what makes a society that reflects and fulfils the aspirations of its citizens. Development theories also now consider many factors beyond the economy. Amartya Sen, Nobel Prize winner for economics, does not argue for the value of economic development as an end in it own right. Instead, his seminal work, *Development as Freedom* (Sen, 1999a), presents the concept that the expansion of freedom is both a primary end and principal means of development. Sen believes that development should involve the removal of the “unfreedoms that leave people with little choice and little opportunity of exercising their reasoned agency” (p. xii). As long ago as 1991, the World Bank understood development to include “other (than economic) important and related attributes ... notably more equality of opportunity and political and civil liberties. The overall goal of development is therefore to increase the economic, political and civil rights of all people” (p. 31). These alternative perspectives include the consideration that the economy should serve to advance the experience of the people, rather than economic goals being solely of value in their own right.

² www.wangaratta-jazz.org.au/docs/

2.2. Arts and environmental sustainability

Issues of environmental sustainability are of increasing concern to rural and remote communities in Australia who are experiencing the greatest impact from climate change. The relationship between environmental sustainability and the arts is a new and growing area of scholarship, with David Curtis of the Institute of Rural Futures at the University of New England in regional New South Wales a leading figure. Curtis (2007) suggests that visual and performing arts may be valuable in influencing environmental behaviour positively, on both individual and community levels, as the arts can “aid engagement and participation by a broad cross section of the community, and ... provide powerful vehicles for community mobilisation, empowerment, and information transfer” (p. 15). In an article in the *Australian Landcare* journal, Curtis elaborates on ways that the arts can advance the aims of the Landcare program by aiding communication about landcare, improving the facilitation of workshops, and making landcare projects more memorable. Landcare programs in turn can make a significant contribution to rural regeneration, as the rehabilitation of the physical environment achieved through such projects can contribute to ongoing economic livelihood of residents, especially farmers experiencing threats to viability from salination of waterways and erosion of land. Other researchers investigating the relationship between arts and environmental concerns include Annie Bolitho, whose PhD research examined how creative approaches can assist in re-establishing communities’ connections to water (Bolitho, 2003).

In rural and remote communities throughout Australia, arts projects are increasingly being undertaken to raise awareness of and increase community engagement in the finding of solutions to environment concerns. In the small town of Bega, New South Wales, the *Clean Energy for Eternity: Art and Environment Project* sought to mobilize community action around energy issues through creative arts action (Hunt, 2007). The Wetlands and Waderbirds Festival held in Murray River country in rural South Australia is an arts and nature celebration of the annual migration of wetland and migratory birds into the coastal wetlands of the region (www.wetlandsandwaders.com). This festival has dual purposes, increasing tourism to the region, and increasing awareness of the value of the flora and fauna of the local area and issues around water management, an increasingly serious problem.

A conference of the Ecological Society held in regional New South Wales in 2003 featured an arts program. This programming innovation had dual purposes: to encourage scientists to reflect on the use of alternative methods of communicating their science to society, and to assist the community’s understanding of complex scientific information (www.ecolsoc.org.au/2003/arts.html). A national arts and ecology forum held in Noosa, regional Queensland in April 2008 involved professionals representing the arts, landcare, geology, ecology, research, agriculture, environment, community, and cultural sectors. Participants of that event made a submission to the Australia government’s *Review of the National Innovation System* advising that innovation policy should be aligned with cultural policy and infused with concern for ecological sustainability: “If Australia is to develop unified innovations policy it should acknowledge and support the knowledge-making and transformative roles of the creative arts” (Childs et al., 2008, p. 2).

This relationship between arts and environment was explored in the Cultural Development Network’s *Small Town Big Picture* project, undertaken in a cluster of small rural towns in Victoria in 2002-2003. Social researcher Maureen Rogers set out to work with communities to create a series of local indicators of sustainability through a process of community consultation. The project methodology was upended, however, with the addition of a

significant arts component, used especially as a tool of community engagement. The final result was an unprecedented success with an outstanding participation rate in the project, exemplified by the attendance of 50% of one town's entire population at the project's launch. The upshot was that this researcher, new to the arts at the beginning of the project, commented that she "couldn't imagine working with communities ever again without arts involvement" (Rogers & Spokes, 2003, p. 12).

2.3. Social equity achieved through arts and creative initiatives

While economic outcomes have been a significant focus of research about the arts in rural and remote areas in Australia over the previous decades, more recently the contribution of arts to cultural and social well-being outcomes have been prioritized. Smiles (2006) comments that this focus has predominated recent forums and conferences. State and local governments in Australia are increasingly considering this contribution of the arts, led by the pioneering work of organizations such as VicHealth. This state health authority devotes significant resources to projects and research exploring the relationship between arts and social inclusion, health and well-being (www.vichealth.vic.gov.au). The national arts authority, the Australia Council for the Arts, has also made the relationship between arts and well-being a focus through initiatives such as the publication of the book *Art and Wellbeing* (Mills & Brown, 2004) that featured case studies of many rural and remote areas where the arts have made a contribution.

The Government of Western Australia (2004) suggests that the arts in regional communities provide an inclusive base from which communities can develop tolerance and understanding, in turn helping to foster and strengthen the identity of a town or region. This view is supported by the Sustainability Strategy developed for that state, comprised primarily of rural and remote communities, which asserts that "arts and culture are central to the identity of a healthy and vibrant society," allowing the exploration of issues and providing the "creative edge" necessary when communities are confronted with new and difficult problems (Government of Western Australia, 2003, p. 250).

The framework for much of this type of work is a *community cultural development* or *community arts* approach in which communities and artists work together exploring issues of mutual interest through the arts. Benefits of arts engagement valued in this framework extend to the overall health and well-being of societies and communities, particularly as they struggle to deal with economic, social, and environmental crises (Hawkes, 2001; Sonn et al., 2002; Boon & Plastow, 2004; Mills & Brown, 2004). As well, individuals considered disadvantaged or "at-risk" may experience particular benefits. For example, the arts can provide an accessible and socially acceptable platform for self-expression for people who are both in the criminal justice system and those who are at risk of entering it. This is particularly true of Indigenous people, especially those from regional areas, who are over-represented within the criminal justice system (Community Development and Justice Standing Committee, 2004).

One theme identified frequently in the literature is the contribution of arts participation to the strength of rural communities (Alston & Kent, 2001; Anwar McHenry, 2009). Anwar McHenry's literature review provides evidence of enhanced participation and creativity in public decision-making, strengthening community capacity, identity, and sense of place (Anwar McHenry, 2009). Kingma (2003a) has identified the transmission of information, building of relationships, and boosted productivity of community organizations as results of arts and creative initiatives in regional communities. Alston & Kent (2001) also report that

arts practice and strategy can work to preserve viable populations. Gibson (2008) addresses perhaps the most significant population concern for rural Australia, that of youth out-migration. He observes that while formal job creation may be limited through creative activities, some of the impacts of youth migration to cities could be mitigated by enriched regional social life and mediating perceptions of the advantages and drawbacks of rural versus urban life.

2.4. The role of the arts in civic engagement

Within the social domain, the issue of civic engagement, or the active involvement of citizens with decisions about their future, can also be considered. The arts have often been utilized as a means of engagement of rural communities in civic activities, making a political statement or protest (Hanna, 2002), raising awareness of an issue, or working towards collaborative solutions (e.g., Mills & Brown, 2004; Brennan-Horley, Connell & Gibson, 2007; Lea, 2009; Ruane, 2007; Cleveland, 2007).

For Indigenous communities, especially those based in rural areas, arts can often be the most meaningful tool for engagement and expression around important issues. American author Bill Cleveland, in his book *Arts and Upheaval*, documents the way former soldiers and members of the Aboriginal community worked to heal the social, environmental, and health impacts of atom bomb testing conducted at Maralinga in remote South Australia in the 1950s and 1960s (Cleveland, 2008). Cultural performance provides an opportunity for civic engagement for Indigenous communities, through providing space for representation and identity formation, political engagement, and critique of the dominant culture (Slater, 2007). This function is particularly prevalent at festivals primarily initiated and run by Indigenous individuals and organizations. The Dreaming Festival held in regional Queensland, for example, provides “a lens through which Indigenous cultural politics can be examined” (Slater, 2007, p. 573). The Garma Festival, described in detail in the case study included in this paper, provides a significant opportunity for Indigenous communities of the remote Top End of Australia to re-engage and revitalize their traditional cultural practices.

The Cultural Development Network has identified a dearth of literature about the links between creative communities and civic engagement, and conceived the Generations Project to address this topic. This three-year nationwide arts project involved collaborations between artists, communities, and local government accompanied by a research component. The five participating councils covered a wide demographic and geographic diversity across Australia; [Dalrymple Shire](#) in rural far west Queensland; three regional cities of Wangaratta, [Greater Geelong](#), and [Latrobe](#) in Victoria; and one outer metropolitan council of Liverpool in New South Wales. Each council identified an area of significant concern for their municipality as a focus. These included issues of community identity in an environment of globalized culture; energy production in the context of climate change; Indigenous sovereignty on leasehold land; country becoming city and changing identity; aging; schooling; imagining futures; and having a future. RMIT University researchers Martin Mulligan and Pia Smith are currently engaged in data collection with communities and artists, with the final report expected by the end of 2009. The “Regenerating Community” Conference, to be held in Melbourne in September 2009, will particularly focus on the civic engagement capacity of the arts,

especially within regional and rural communities. The findings and art outcomes of the five Generations projects will be featured.³

2.5. Arts and cultural vitality

When arts and creativity are considered within the economic and social dimensions, the contribution is instrumental, a way of achieving some other valued goal. Within the cultural dimension, however, arts participation can be considered in terms of its intrinsic value, with the experience being worthwhile in its own right for individuals and the community. McCarthy and colleagues (2004) suggest that people are not drawn to the arts for their instrumental effects, but because of the meaning, pleasure, and emotional stimulation that they provide and that these intrinsic effects are satisfying in themselves. Hawkes (2001) comments that “we can learn from history that society makes or discovers meaning through its arts” (p. 24). Kingma (2002) argues that

the arts give expression to culture, which, in turn, embodies society’s values. More than this, the arts as an expression of culture, becomes a storehouse of perceived values and an expression of the ‘beautiful’ as opposed to the ‘useful’ in our society. Arts in the community challenges and stimulates artists, providing fertile ground for the growth of new ways of expression. (p. 1)

The literature provides many examples of the way cultural initiatives have enriched rural and remote communities. Muir studied the impact of new facilities on the cultural life of regional communities. In the small town of Port Lincoln, South Australia, the establishment of the Nautilus Theatre increased opportunities for local residents to enjoy the arts. The number of Commonwealth and state-funded arts performances in the region over the following 18 months rose from 1 to 40 (Muir, 2003). Kingma (2002) discusses a series of case studies of community cultural development projects funded by the Australia Council that foster the arts as a creative occupation in its own right.

Social researcher Martin Mulligan has directed several recent investigations about the arts in regional communities in Australia, leading him to argue strongly for the value of the cultural dimension for its own sake. He comments that regional arts should not be thought of “as an ‘industry’, but rather as a response to, and expression of, community needs and desires” (2007, p. 37). He argues that communities will be stronger if they are more “culturally vital,” and that “our economy should support an investment in cultural vitality rather than the other way around” (p. 35). This opinion echoes that of Greek philosopher Aristotle who believed that, “wealth is evidently not the good we are seeking; for it is merely useful for the sake of something else” (United Nations Development Program, 1990, p. 9).

In their evaluation of the Regional Arts Development Program implemented by Regional Arts Victoria, Mulligan & Smith (2007) examined the contribution of a program that employed officers with a regional arts development role across Victoria. Regional arts development officers were found to have made significant impact on their local regions in drawing down funding and co-ordinating federal, state, and local government initiatives. But it was their contribution to a more vital cultural life through support of networks and artists, including

³ <http://www.cdn-generations.net.au/overview.htm>

regional arts networks, which the researchers identified as the most valuable community contribution of the program.

This section has discussed research evidence for the contribution of the arts to revitalization or regeneration of rural and remote communities in Australia considering economic, social, environmental, and cultural impacts. The next section introduces some of the recent major reports and the factors that researchers have named as critical ingredients or common themes for the building of culturally vital rural communities.

3. Critical ingredients or common themes necessary to build long-term vitality for the arts in rural communities

3.1. Regional Arts Australia report findings

This section describes in detail findings from the Regional Arts Australia's 2006 report because of the breadth and depth of this project's reach. The most extensive consultation ever undertaken in Australia, it considers the input of 830 regional residents from 250 different places throughout the country. Dunn & Koch (2006) identified priority areas for strategic planning and action for regional arts as follows:

- Community capacity building: how the arts can be better recognised and equipped as an effective medium for developing more sustainable communities
- Strengthening regional centres: how the arts can respond to current issues, the need for strong identity and social cohesion in regional centres large and small
- Supporting arts development and practice in Indigenous people and communities: how the arts can contribute to positive futures for Aboriginal people
- Engaging young people: how the arts can contribute to more fulfilling lives for regional youth
- Supporting the development of cultural tourism: how the arts can contribute to greater economic growth and diversity through tourism.

The study identified the strengths of regional arts in Australia. The most fundamental of these is the

deep attachment of regional people to their place, the natural environment and their communitiesthat finds expression in cultural activities both sporting and artistic... Hundreds of regional, rural, remote and very remote communities have established an arts landscape as distinctive and as 'Australian' as the country itself. (p. 11)

Assets of regional communities identified in this report include strong appreciation of the arts as a medium for:

- Finding and proclaiming unique identity,
- Exploring and resolving community issues,
- Celebrating heritage and crystallising aspirations, and
- Engaging young people in community life and development (despite the challenge that such an ambition represents when contemporary culture and “big-city” attractions are so strong).

Factors that this research uncovered as significant for the success of arts development in regional Australia include:

- **Peak body activity:** the unique regional arts programs established and maintained by peak body Regional Arts Australia, its member organizations, and the Australian Government
- **Presence of artists:** the growing number of professional artists in regional communities who have great ability, experience, innovation, creativity
- **Arts supporters and volunteers:** thousands of arts supporters and arts volunteers who work on exhibitions, festivals, community cultural development projects and youth arts activities, and support artists in their development and in their capacity to work in their communities.
- **Better funding support, especially cross-government:** communities do not seek handouts, but look instead for stronger investment in the arts as a means of achieving sustainable and inclusive development of their communities as a whole. Cross-government support is critical to the expansion and development of the arts in regional communities – national, state, and local governments. (Dunn & Koch, 2006)

This project also explored obstacles to the development of arts and creativity in regional Australia communities, including:

- **Lack of appropriate facilities** for creating and presenting arts activities.
- **‘Resource poor’ nature of communities** that have insufficient money, services, and facilities to overcome the tyranny of distance and the tide of economic and community decline. The long tradition of regional communities sustaining themselves is under threat as drought, fire, flood, youth migration, and the removal of services take their toll.
- **Challenges of changing populations:** young and old move out, “sea-changers,” hobby farmers, and new workers move in. This leads to a need for different community dynamics and new ways to promote acceptance and inclusion.
- **Lack of status for arts:** engagement in and support of the arts in the country can lack the status and attention that sporting activities attract.
- **City-centric approach of funders and gatekeepers:** sponsors, governments, and arts companies are often cluttered with ‘big-city’ arts issues and opportunities.

3.2. Other research findings identifying critical themes

Researchers Kenyon & Black (2001), in a report about rural regeneration published by the Rural Industries Support and Development Corporation, discuss issues of significant for rural revitalization in Australia. While their work is not specifically focussed on arts, their findings have much relevance to the current topic. They discuss the importance of a “new approach to rebuilding” that is gradually being adopted by governments and development agencies. In this approach, development occurs through communities working from the “bottom up” and “inside out,” rather than the traditional model of “top down” and “outside in” (p. 2).

These researchers describe the significance of facilitators who can lead communities into and through regeneration. In doing so, they identify a number of roles for facilitators:

- energiser, creating an atmosphere of energy, excitement, optimism and positiveness
- broker, linking communities to experiences, networks, methodologies, tools, information and resources that may be relevant to their needs and aspirations
- coach; optimising the knowledge confidence and experience of community participants by demystifying concepts procedures and strategies, facilitating group discussions and helping the group overcome stumbling blocks and conflicts
- champion; promoting the community and its revival effort to the wider world (Kenyon & Black, 2001, p. 2)

And finally, they stress the importance of five factors in the renewal process:

- an expression of healthy dissatisfaction with the status quo and a willingness to explore and experiment with developing innovative solutions and options
- demonstration of positive mindset and opportunism
- the use of appropriate community planning and development processes
- implementation of a comprehensive and locally owned and resourced local economic development agenda
- presence and renewal of local leadership (pp. 19-20)

Other factors considered vital were identified by Richards (2006a): a focus on retaining young people through employment, recreational, and educational initiatives and building on local culture, local history and heritage, local people, assets, and characteristics.

4. Recommendations from the literature

Analysis of the Australian literature provides a range of actionable ideas for rural and small towns in other places.

4.1. Regional Arts Australia study

The recommendations for future development of arts in regional communities from Regional Arts Australia's recent study (Dunn & Koch, 2006) are listed in full here, given their significant contribution to the current discussion. These authors considered the following findings vital for immediate consideration in Australia:

Recognition of regional arts

- Preparation and distribution of reader friendly resource materials explaining the support available for regional arts activity around Australia and the decision-making processes that serve major programs. These materials should include summary statistical information on the regional arts sector and its value.
- Review of funding decision processes to ensure appropriate community representation and promulgate information on that process (including details of funding panel members).
- Gathering of qualitative and quantitative data on regional arts activity and impacts for general promotion of the regional arts sector.

Local government regional arts partnerships

- Collaboration with local government to develop a consistent arts and cultural policy for adoption nationally.
- Collaboration with local government to identify opportunities for the creation of community arts spaces for use by artists and community arts organisations.
- Establishment of an annual "Excellence in the Arts" award for regionally based Local Government Authorities.

Promoting and profiling regional arts

- Collaboration with the Australia Council to find ways to promote and extend information and training to assist regional artists and facilitators in developing media skills.
- Collaboration with regional media networks and business to develop an arts promotion campaign.
- Investigation of advocacy training as a new module for the Creative Volunteering Skills Development program.
- Holding of a national focus day on which to celebrate the diverse range of regional arts activity across the nation, with a Regional Arts Capital to be selected each year

for showcasing existing arts activity and facilities and for special development funding (corporate funding involvement to be investigated).

- Investigate the establishment of an awards program which recognises outstanding regionally based arts volunteers.

Extending the network of regional arts

- Development of a framework for use by communities in building alliances with sporting clubs towards a collaborative approach to promoting arts and sport as complementary cultural activities.
- Development and negotiation of arts support strategies to be promoted and assisted by regional libraries.
- Investigation of methods to promulgate advisory information on partnership building for the arts sector.
- Investigation of the creation of a youth element in funding programs.
- Development of strategies for regional arts engagement in related health, education and employment programs.
- Development of a funded mentor program with professional artists.

Indigenous arts development

- Initiation of discussions with DCITA (National Dept of Communication Information Technology and the Arts) to clarify existing Indigenous arts funding arrangements and disseminate information to communities through State and Territory members of Regional Arts Australia.
- Collaboration with the Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination to identify the potential of Shared Responsibility Agreements and Regional Partnership Agreements to increase the level of Indigenous arts and cultural activity.

Developing arts facilities in regional Australia

- Development of strategies for mapping arts and cultural infrastructure and assessing costs/benefits.
- Development of a national policy for arts facilities development.
- Identification and exploration of models of successful community capacity building through the arts (including social, economic and cultural impacts) as a means of promoting support amongst stakeholders and funding agencies, with emphasis on new government/corporate/ community partnerships promoting further development.

4.2. Synthesis of recommendations

The following section synthesizes recommendations from the literature for actions necessary to build long-term vitality for the arts in rural communities into six major themes:

- Commitment from government to cultural vitality dimension of planning and public policy
- Recognition of the value of local cultural product and practices
- Support for arts in communities, especially networks of supporting professionals
- Better funding support, including long-term investment and less onerous application processes
- Data collection about arts activities including outcomes at a local level
- Awards for good practice

Commitment from government to cultural vitality dimension of planning and public policy

The action considered likely to lead to the most significant change is a commitment from government to the value of the cultural vitality dimension of planning and public policy. These comments are directed to the three levels of government; federal, state, and local. Dunn & Koch (2006), for example, comment that the creation and support of contexts for sustainable local communities should be a major policy direction of governments in Australia. The Community Development and Justice Standing Committee (2004) research found a perception that local government tends to seem more committed to sport than the arts and that arts organizations believe they are the most vulnerable to budget cuts in times of fiscal restraint. Mulligan & Smith (2007) provide suggestions for local government, commenting that the best hope for sustainable regional arts sectors is if councils made a commitment to cultural vitality as part of their core business. They warn, however, that this will not be an easy transition, with time and patient effort needed to bring about the needed shift in attitudes and priorities.

Recognition of the value of local cultural product and practices

The importance of regional communities recognizing and valuing their own culture, including locally generated cultural products is very significant. While this may be challenging and may take some time to achieve, it is an essential factor in the development of sustainable local culture and employment for local artists (Mulligan & Smith, 2007). Mulligan & Smith predict that ongoing government investment in regional arts makes it possible for more artists to work outside metropolitan centres, and many prefer to do for lifestyle reasons. Radical changes in information technologies over the last 30 years has also made it easier for practicing artists to live and work in rural and regional communities, so it is likely that the pool of practitioners in rural communities will slowly increase over time.

Support for arts in communities, especially networks of supporting professionals

Networks are needed to provide arts services, resources, and support to communities (Mulligan & Smith, 2007). Suggested networks include a decentralized network of arts officers within easy reach of all communities to enable regional communities to develop arts projects that reflect their own unique experiences. The West Australian state government committee considered the lack of such a network of regional arts development officers as the

single biggest obstacle to regional communities achieving equal access to arts funding, touring programs, and government support (Community Development and Justice Standing Committee, 2004). Their recommendations were that many of the problems facing a dwindling volunteer base in regional arts organizations would be overcome with such a network of locally based arts professionals.

Support for volunteers, given the significant role they play in the creative life of their rural and remote communities, is essential (Smiles, 2006). Volunteer organizations are often expected to complete tasks that are often beyond their expertise and demand excessive time commitments. These pressures are leading to a decline in the number of people prepared to give of their time and skills for their community. Without more regionally based support, there will inevitably be a long-term reduction in the number and quality of arts-based activities in regional Australia.

Support structures within each region, such as that available within the Sport and Recreation fields, would make a substantial difference to arts development in regional areas: support with onerous funding application processes, the identification of new funding sources, help with project management, assistance with the burden of public liability insurance. This support should include a form of training that is held close to where people live and employs a flexible model of delivery to meet the specific needs of different communities (Smiles, 2006).

Better funding support, including long-term investment and less onerous application processes

Long-term investment in the arts, not seed funding, is required especially to encourage interest in local product (Mulligan & Smith, 2007). A more collegiate approach to regional arts funding, including alignment in application and reporting requirements is suggested to reduce the burden especially of volunteers (Community Development and Justice Standing Committee, 2004). Percent for Art schemes represent an effective way of stimulating creative activity, providing work for local artists and beautifying the local environment. Encouraging developers to participate in such schemes will, in the medium- to long-term, increase the value of the built environment and will develop the community's artistic and cultural base (Community Development and Justice Standing Committee, 2004).

Data collection about arts activities including outcomes at a local level

Collection data about outcomes of arts activities, and consideration of these in implementation of activities, is essential (Mulligan & Smith, 2007; Dunn & Koch, 2006). Undervaluing of the arts is both reflected in and exacerbated by a lack of empirical data in the fields of arts and culture at a regional level. Figures that show employment rates, household spending, and levels of production are not available at the regional level and therefore it is difficult to make definitive statements about the economic impact of the arts on regional communities. Until this deficiency is rectified, it will remain possible for governments to ignore the arts as a core activity in favour of other, more statistically supported priorities (Community Development and Justice Standing Committee, 2004)

Awards for good practice

Awards for good practice are a strategy suggested by researchers Mulligan & Smith (2007) and Dunn & Koch (2006) for increasing the value and profile of regional and rural arts activity.

5. Conclusion

This paper has explored the contribution of the arts and creativity to the development and revitalization of rural and remote communities in Australia. Findings from the Australian literature indicate that arts and creative initiatives are significant for the development of rural and remote communities, in economic, environmental, social, and cultural domains. The “creative industry” model and its primary consideration of the contribution of the arts to local economies was introduced, as was the community cultural development approach that values mainly social outcomes of arts activity in communities, including health and well-being, social inclusion, and educational achievements. Also examined were arguments that ascribe value to the cultural dimension in its own right, in which the intrinsic value of arts and creative opportunities for rural and remote communities is recognised. This view leads to the consideration that the economy should support arts and creativity rather than the other way around.

Factors that seem pivotal in building long-term sustainability for arts and creativity in rural communities include appreciation of local culture, history and heritage, local people, assets, and characteristics; enthusiastic local leadership, positive attitudes, local entrepreneurship, and investment; and right timing and a focus on retaining young people through employment, recreational, and educational initiatives.

The research examined for this paper points to numerous factors that might support initiatives in other communities. The most fundamental of these is the necessity of government commitment (at all levels) to the value of cultural dimension in planning and public policy. Other factors include the need for recognition of the value of local cultural product and practices, more support for arts in communities, especially through networks of regional arts development officers, assistance for volunteers (including training), and reduction of bureaucratic obstacles. Also suggested are better funding programs, including long-term investment and less onerous application processes, as well as data collection about arts activities and outcomes at a local level and awards that recognize and acknowledge excellence.

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Annex A.

Case studies/projects – leading examples illustrating how rural communities have been revitalized or sustained through arts and creative activity

The following seven case studies are grouped thematically, providing information about activities relevant to small rural towns and remote, including Indigenous, communities.

- Community rebuilding after natural disaster of bushfires
- Promulgation of Indigenous culture through cultural initiatives
 - Re-storying indigenous culture for indigenous and non-indigenous people, Garma Festival, Northern Territory
 - Recognizing the value of indigenous cultural heritage and living cultural traditions, Cape York, Far North Queensland
- Special places: built, natural and cultural environment
 - Successful festival builds on local culture, Port Fairy, Victoria
 - Townsfolk take action to regenerate as a “Mural Town” Sheffield, Tasmania
 - Creative community is generated through space and place for artists, Natimuk, Victoria
 - Building on buildings, Rural Art Deco, Ranfurly, New Zealand

Regeneration of rural communities after bushfire



Creative responses to bushfire

Summary: This case study examines the contribution of creative responses to recovery from bushfire, an ever-present possibility for many areas of remote and rural Australia. These include organisational responses and artistic projects engendered in local communities.

Context: The magnitude and frequency of bushfire damage is increasing around Australia, as much of the country becomes hotter and drier as a result of climate change, compounded by changes in land management and usage since European settlement. Communities in the southern part of Australia, most recently in Victoria, have just experienced their worst ever fires. Serious damage was wrought through the loss of permanent buildings: homes, public facilities, shops and businesses, and many human and animal lives.

A range of creative responses to bushfire trauma has been engendered around Australia over recent years. The need for creative rituals through which people experience and deal with loss is described in the following comment from government researchers considering a memorial after fires in the Australian Capital Territory in 2002/03:

When a community experiences a disaster, spontaneously developed rituals, symbols and memorials are used to give expression to people's feelings of shock and loss. Later, the development and sanctioning by the community of more formal rituals and memorials which acknowledge and give meaning to what people have been through can also provide comfort.⁴

Creative responses to bushfire come from all areas of the wider community: initiatives led or sponsored by government, those driven by community organizations or members, and those instigated by artists working with and through their communities or in their own practice. Several examples are described below.

- A government led initiative for a bushfire memorial was felt to be an appropriate response to serious fires in the ACT region in late 2002. Ideas for the form of this memorial were developed through an extensive community consultative process and

⁴ A Bushfire Memorial for the ACT: Community Consultation Discussion Paper, 11 June 2004, p. 3

the final installation included 500 images from 80 families and individuals, and inscriptions from 160 people used on bricks for the curved entry wall.⁵

- In the tiny rural town of St. Marys, Tasmania, (population 600) community member Jan Sparkes instigated a community bushfire recovery initiative *Re-Gener-8*, in December 2007 after a devastating three-week fire the previous year. Sparkes was motivated by a belief that documenting local knowledge, stories, and experiences from the bushfires and acknowledging community resilience would contribute to the ongoing healing process. The project involved a collaboration between residents, the local Council, and the University of Tasmania's Department of Rural Health and resulted in several activities including art exhibitions, music, a mural painting, and the launch of the book compiled by the community containing stories, interviews, poems, images, humour, and hints from community and various organizations' experiences during the fires.⁶
- Community-based artists Anna and Marita Smith worked with their local community to create a performance work response to the fire related trauma they observed after bushfires in 2005. The *Fire Up* project involved a broad cross-section of local people from several small rural communities in the south east of Victoria (Foster, Toora, Welshpool, and Fish Creek). Project participants, including five schools, two choirs, ten local artists and musicians, and seniors groups worked closely with many accomplished local artists and the Smiths as choreographers. Renowned children's author Alison Lester, botanical artist Celia Rosser, and others all contributed their expertise to the process, to create a multi-artform performance presented as part of the Prom Coast Seachange Festival in 2007.⁷
- Regional Arts Victoria responded to the fires that swept Victoria in early 2009 with a range of creative initiatives:
 - On the ground assistance to support community arts projects that can boost morale and contribute to community reconnection and recovery,
 - Employment of a [Regional Arts Development Officer](#) position to work directly in bushfire affected towns, providing administrative support, developing contact information databases, helping write grants and managing small projects, and assisting to get small cultural organisations back on their feet.
 - Contribution to a cultural working party, along with staff from several peak arts organizations and [Arts Victoria](#) to co-ordinate efforts regarding support programs, and to ensure that arts and culture remain on the agenda as the towns and communities impacted by the fires enter the rebuilding phase.

⁵ artsACT, Department of Urban Services, *A Bushfire Memorial for the ACT, Community Consultation: Final Report*, www.arts.act.gov.au/pages/images/Bushfire%20Memorial%20Comm%20Consult%20Final%20Report.pdf accessed 10.2.09. www.arts.act.gov.au/pages/page106.asp

⁶ *Regeneration of a rural community – Bushfire and recovery*. <http://fcms.its.utas.edu.au/healthsci/ruralhealth/newsdetail.asp?INewsEventId=2702> accessed 10.2.09

⁷ http://kinesismagazine.com.au/dance/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=64&Itemid=1 accessed 11.2.09

- In partnership with the [Department of Sustainability and Environment](#) (DSE) and the [Country Fire Authority](#) (CFA) RAV developed an interactive web-based noticeboard entitled *Storyboard*, to enable fire-affected Victorians to post photos and stories of their experience, provoke some story-telling, and also provide vital information the CFA and DSE can use as a primary resource in their assessment of the fires. It will also direct people to other sites that are providing complementary functions such as “photo-recovery” and matching offers of help with people who need goods or assistance.⁸

The instigators led these responses because of their belief in the power of arts and ritual to bring people together with a positive and common goal, to contribute to community’s reformation after the fires. These beliefs are supported by evidence for the contribution of arts to successful healing and recovery from trauma. Coulter (2008) documents outcomes of art therapy addressing trauma including safe expression of anger, and release from traumatic visual images and explicit memories. Dance movement therapist Amber Gray is internationally recognized for her work assisting recovery from different kinds of traumas through arts activities including drumming and ritual movement (Gray, 2005). Visual artist Anne Riggs’ (2008) research examines the contribution of visual art-making to participants’ capacity to recover from grief and loss resulting from trauma.

⁸ www.rav.net.au/about-us/news-media/story/7/

Promulgation of Indigenous culture through cultural initiatives



© Yothu Yindi Foundation / Garma Festival. Photographer: Stephen Cherry

Arnhem Land, Northern Territory: Re-storying indigenous culture for indigenous and non-indigenous people. Case study of the Garma festival

Summary description: The Garma Festival of Indigenous Culture, in remote Arnhem Land, Northern Territory, Australia, provides cultural and economic regeneration for Indigenous communities of the region. It also provides non-Indigenous Australians with unique learning experiences of Indigenous culture, within a framework and environment managed by traditional owners.

Main features: promulgation of Indigenous culture amongst Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, tourism, employment, and training

Factors: Indigenous ownership of event, strong leadership, long-standing tradition of cross-cultural artistic experiences, talented artists

Context: This case study examines the Garma Festival, a relatively recent initiative that since 1999 has developed into one of Australia's most significant Indigenous festivals. Garma, organized by the [Yothu Yindi Foundation](#), a not-for-profit Aboriginal corporation, provides intrinsic and instrumental benefits to Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants. All revenue generated from Garma supports the aims of the festival, which are:

- Encouraging and developing economic opportunities for the local Yolngu people through education, training, employment, and enterprise development
- Sharing knowledge and culture, thereby fostering greater understanding between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians
- Nurturing and maintaining Yolngu cultural traditions and practices

Yolngu culture in northeast Arnhem Land – a heartland of Aboriginal culture and land rights – is among the oldest living cultures on earth, stretching back more than 40,000 years. The Garma Festival is a celebration of this Yolngu cultural inheritance, designed to encourage the practice, preservation, and maintenance of traditional dance (bunggul), song (manikay), art, and ceremony. The festival site at Gulkula has profound meaning for Yolngu, as it is where the ancestor Ganbulabula brought the yidaki (didjeridu) into being among the Gumatj people.

This site is very remote, reachable only by flights from Darwin or Cairns a few times a week, or a 1,400 km drive over unpaved roads from Darwin, the capital city of the remote top end of

Australia. This remoteness adds to the unique experience of the visitor, as this land can be visited by permit holders only and is therefore ordinarily out of bounds for non-residents.

In addition to the cultural festival, Garma also provides a significant cultural exchange event, a key educational forum, and an award-winning model for authentic Indigenous tourism.

The Festival is attended annually by capacity audiences; about 1,400 each of Indigenous people from the local region throughout Arnhem Land, the Northern Territory, and Australia, and Balanda (white people) who come primarily to attend the educational forum and experience Indigenous tourism in this unique location. Garma has won several awards including the [2004 And 2005 Brolga Awards For Major Festivals and Events](#) and the [2005 Skai International Eco-Tourism Award](#).

There are significant benefits for all types of festival participants. For example, teachers identify numerous benefits for the young Indigenous people participating in the special music programs, including enhanced confidence in performance situations; increased motivation to pursue musical studies to higher levels; and self-esteem derived from successful achievement and respect for peer musicians from various tribal groups, gained through observing, listening, and reflecting on different cultural contributions.

Researcher Lisa Slater (2006) writes, after her visit to Garma in 2005, that the festival can “help foster anticolonial thinking: moving beyond assimilationist logic by conceptualising spaces of recognition and exchange that encourage the maintenance of difference” (p. 31). “Garma Festival fosters a new intercultural dialogue that disrupts the assimilationist fantasy of a harmonious homogenous Australia. The principles and practices of Garma offer a model and a cultural space for negotiating a new public ethos that recognises the contemporary pertinence of Indigenous thought and encourages a reimagining of Australian democracy” (p. 34).

For this author, a white Australian cultural development worker, the experience of immersion in the striking bush setting, the very well-organized conference activities and campsite, the stimulating forum program, the great sense of co-operation and positive collaboration between Indigenous and other Australians, and the opportunity to witness a full range of highly developed Indigenous cultural practices combined to make participation in this event a very memorable experience and a significant learning opportunity.
www.garma.telstra.com/

Laura, Cape York, Far North Queensland: Recognizing the value of indigenous cultural heritage and living cultural traditions



Summary: This case study features the tiny remote community of Laura in far north Queensland where revitalization of the local community as a result of the recognition of the value of indigenous culture. Two initiatives are central to this process: **Quinkan and Regional Cultural Centre** that features cultural heritage and the Laura Dance Festival that acknowledges the living culture.

Main features: natural and built environment, Indigenous history and living culture

Factors: unique Indigenous cultural heritage, unspoilt natural environment, distinct Indigenous and non-Indigenous “cultural” practices

The tiny town of Laura on Cape York in far North Queensland (population of 100) and its surrounding district has an impact far beyond that of its size. This is largely because of the area’s great cultural significance that has only recently been recognised by non-Indigenous people.

The district is home to world famous Aboriginal art galleries featuring dramatic prehistoric rock paintings. These have been identified as at least 15,000 years old and are listed by UNESCO as among the top ten rock art sites in the world. The paintings and engravings contained in the numerous galleries are a pictorial record of ancestral spirits, Quinkans, and through them represent the laws, socialization, spirituality, and cultural practices that are at the core of Aboriginal life and identity and their connection to the land. Rock Art from the region provides an amazing pictorial record of Aboriginal integration with the Australian landscape for a period of at least 27,000 years.

The Quinkan and Regional Cultural Centre in Far North Queensland was established in 2004 to showcase the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage of the area as well as the natural environment. Local communities sought to improve employment opportunities by developing tourism and promoting arts at the Centre, through guided tours of the rock art galleries, and selling a range of regional Aboriginal arts and crafts. The Centre is owned and operated by the local community and was established with support of the Qld. Heritage Trails Network. This Network, developed over four years from 2001 to 2004, is a \$110 million joint initiative of the Queensland and Australian Governments that links together 43 heritage and cultural sites, museums, natural attractions, and cultural centres.

www.heritagetrails.qld.gov.au/default.html

The project has involved close consultation with the four traditional owner groups which are connected to the Quinkan sandstone region, and is a partnership between the Cook Shire and the Queensland and Commonwealth Governments.

www.quinkancc.com.au/

www.heritagetrails.qld.gov.au/attractions/laura.html

www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,24891708-5013571,00.html

Thousands of national and international tourists make the Centre and the region a destination, especially during the time of the biennial Laura Dance Festival, the largest traditional Indigenous gathering in Australia. This festival began in the early 1980s when communities in the Cape York region decided to reunite for a weekend of song, dance, and celebration. It is held on the Ang-gnarra Festival Grounds, on the site of the traditional “Bora” grounds where the local Kuku Yalanji Aboriginal people had congregated since time immemorial. The most recent festival, held in June 2007, involved more dance groups than ever before and was attended by more than 3,000 visitors, artists, and locals.

www.laurafestival.tv/home.html

www.indigenoustourism.australia.com/news.asp?sub=0671

Also featured in the region is the Laura Heritage Trail, which features history of the region since European settlement, particularly relics of the gold and railway era.

www.quinkancc.com.au/

Special places: Built, natural, and cultural environment



Port Fairy, Victoria: A successful festival builds on local culture

Summary description: The small rural town of Port Fairy in Victoria, Australia, has revitalized over the past 30 or so years to become a lively cultural hub, attractive to tourists and residents alike. Factors contributing to this success include the unspoilt and very scenic natural environment, the well-designed and preserved built environment, and shared Irish heritage of many members of the local community. A year-round series of well-attended cultural events has developed around these assets, most notably the award winning Port Fairy Folk Festival, which attracts more than 20,000 people each year.

Context: In the small rural town of Port Fairy, Victoria (pop 3,000) reduced opportunities from changed farming and fishing opportunities led to downturn for the community, until revitalization through cultural development occurred over the past 30 years. The town has evolved into a lively cultural hub, attractive to tourists and residents. Younger people, including many professionals who work in the town or region, choose Port Fairy as a long term home, balancing the population of non-resident holiday home owners and a number of older residents, many of whom are retired farmers from the larger farming district of the region.

Several factors contribute to the success of the cultural development initiatives. Notably these are the unspoilt and very scenic natural environment, well-designed and preserved built environment, and shared Irish heritage of much of the local community. A year-round series of well-attended cultural events has developed around these assets, most especially the 33-year-old Port Fairy Folk Festival. This festival grew out of an idea proposed to the Port Fairy community by Jamie McKew of the Geelong Folk Music Club. McKew recognized the synergy between the ambience of the town in which his grandmother lived and the genre of the music his group wanted to promote, and suggested the presentation of a festival. The idea was gradually adopted by the local community and is now well supported by the Moyne Shire Council, local service clubs, community organizations, and residents who contribute significant volunteer time, while also enjoying significant benefit. The festival attracts top international acts and crowds of more than 20,000 people annually. It contributes significant economic benefits to the local community through direct spending by festival-goers in local businesses and fundraising initiatives by community organizations. Primary schools raise up to \$20,000 annually through creative initiatives, such as the provision of bed and breakfast accommodation in the school buildings.

The Festival provides significant other cultural benefits to the community as well, contributing to the sense of a creative and vital place. For example, schools throughout the region enjoy an annual artist-in-resident program, visits from festival performers, and opportunities for high-profile creative and performing opportunities.

Because of the tourism infrastructure that has developed to meet the demands of this significant event, the region has become an ideal location for other events. A year-round program has gradually evolved, all catering for slightly different markets of cultural tourists and locals. These include the Koroit Irish festival, a celebration of the region's Irish heritage; a series of winter weekends, themed "Comedy," "Art & Jazz," "Food & Wine," and "History & Heritage"; a book fair that includes author readings and signings, presentations, practical workshops, sales, and displays; a Spring Music Festival of classical and contemporary ensemble music; and the most recent addition to the program, the Tarerer Festival, a celebration of Indigenous cultures.

www.port-fairy.com/

www.portfairyfolkfestival.com/



Sheffield, Tasmania: Townsfolk take action to regenerate as a "Mural Town"

Summary: This case study describes a deliberate economic revitalization strategy undertaken by community members in the tiny town of Sheffield, Tasmania. Townspeople were inspired by the community of Chemainus, Canada, to become a "mural town," a strategy that has been successful in attracting significant numbers of tourists and ongoing program of cultural activity.

Context: Sheffield, Tasmania (population 1,200) was a prosperous small town until 1963, when it was the centre for activity for dam building for the Tasmanian HydroPower Development Scheme. When this work was completed, the town declined, despite the physical beauty of the surrounding pristine World Heritage Area. In 1985, residents and business people gathered to consider possible regeneration initiatives. Fortuitously,

the night before the meeting, a documentary on the small town of Chemainus, Canada, was aired, describing that town's success in becoming a tourist destination as a "mural town."

Sheffield residents decided to use Chemainus' idea as a model for their own action, and the first mural was commissioned in 1986. Since then, more than 47 murals have been painted on the walls of the town and surrounding areas, each depicting something of the history of the region. This strategy has been successful, with mural art proving a turning point for the economic prosperity of the region. Just as had occurred in Chemainus, Sheffield soon reaped the benefits brought by a blossoming tourism industry. The murals have attracted an

estimated 120,000 people to the town every year; leading to more trade, more shops, more accommodation and restaurants, more jobs, more residents, and more funds in the community. As a project instigated and driven by the community itself, in response to self-identified challenges, the murals are considered by locals to provide a sense of purpose and self-esteem to the whole town, in addition to their economic benefits.

The interest in murals engendered through this strategy has led to the establishment of another significant event, the annual week-long Mural Fest. Attracting participants from the region and further afield, the Mural Fest has become a recognized event on tourist schedules. In 2008, the region successfully hosted “The Global Mural Fest & Conference,” attracting 150 delegates from around the world. The project and murals have been documented as an audio tour, commissioned by the Kentish Council to guide visitors around the murals. As a result of these two initiatives, the whole Kentish Municipality has become known as “Tasmania’s Outdoor Art Gallery,” and townspeople describe Sheffield as “a little town with BIG ideas.”

www.muralfest.com.au/

www.cradleinfo.com.au/pages.asp?code=32

www.sheffieldmurals.com.au/

www.discovertasmania.com/destinations/north_west_coast/sheffield

www.smh.com.au/news/Tasmania/Sheffield/2005/02/17/1108500205951.html



Natimuk, Victoria: A creative community is generated through space and place for artists

Summary: This case study describes Natimuk, a tiny rural town in northwestern Victoria that has recently experienced a significant cultural revival owing to the growing community of artists who have made the town their home and workplace. Factors that attract artists to the area include the availability of cheap housing and studio space, the unique physical environment close to the rock-climbing mecca of Mt. Arapiles, and the presence of each other. The biennial Nati Frinj Festival is a focus for much of the creative energy of the region, but Natimuk artists also export their work and ideas across the country and the world.

Context: Natimuk is a tiny rural town (population 500) in the northwest of Victoria, Australia, near Mount Arapiles. At the beginning of the twentieth century it was a bustling community

with more than 70 shops and industries, including a flour mill and steel foundry. After it was bypassed by the interstate highway and railway, the town's development slowed, and until recently has been very quiet centre, retaining much of its original character as a Lutheran community. The longstanding drought has also severely impacted this community, with the lake that was formerly the centre of summer life – used for swimming, windsailing, and fishing – now completely dry.

However, the town has recently enjoyed a renaissance due to two related factors: the region's popularity as a rock climbing destination and as home base for a diverse range of artists. In the 1980s, Mt. Arapiles began to be known by climbers from all over the world, who are drawn to its spectacular cliffs and more than 2,000 climbing routes. Many of these rock climbers, also artists and partners of artists, have chosen to live near Mt. Arapiles, as the availability of cheap housing and studio space makes a possible a lifestyle that includes time for rock climbing and artistic practice. Artist Robert Grenfell believes there is a close connection between rock climbing and the arts because of the risks and creative flair required for both pursuits. Several practitioners actually make art that involves climbing, like aerial dancer Jillian Pearce whose company, Y-Space, is renowned for their high-altitude creative work and Simon Barley of Bambuco whose work with giant bamboo structures takes him all around the world.

The presence of artists makes a creative environment that in itself attracts other artists, animators, filmmakers, dancers, aerialists, conceptual artists, shadow puppeteers, performers, scriptwriters, poets, writers, wood craftspeople, printmakers, photographers, sculptors, multi-media artists, musicians, and painters. Practitioners and companies now based in Natimuk include:

- *TransVision Arts*, a company that performs socio-critical theatre and develops forum theatre projects exploring social issues with adults and young people
- *Play at Being* company that uses contemporary theatre performance to question the nature of existence, through work with puppets, theatre, projections, digital images, shadows, VJ software and music, and innovative performance spaces (including an agricultural shed and a large, delicate, white inflatable cube)
www.natimuk.com/html/play_at_being.html
- *Transcience*, the creation of award-winning animator Dave Jones, who developed a style of work using the internet and Flash animation so that he could relocate permanently from the city. He now has several international awards for his animated short films and online games, and has been shown at the Melbourne Film Festival. *In My Day*, the short film Jones created with pupils at Natimuk Primary School, won Best Animated Short Film in the 2005 Melbourne International Film Festival.
- *The Goat Gallery*, that features monthly exhibitions of local artists including Anthony Pelchen, whose work has hung in the National Gallery in Canberra, and Jill McLeod, who recently won a final place in Metro 5, the nation's richest art prize for people under 35.
- *Skink Press*, the publishing arm of the Nati Frinj, which publishes the creative works of Natimuk and creative works on Natimuk.
- Regular dance festival *Gaining Momentum*, that began as a contact improvisation workshop

It has been suggested that the artists in Natimuk comprise a “school” in the sense of the *plein air* or the Heidelberg school of location-based artistic oeuvres. What binds these artists together is not a shared form but a shared inspiration: the wish to create art and live in this Wimmera environment. Like other schools, this group derive inspiration from each other.
www.natimuk.com/html/natimuk_school.html

Much creative energy is centred around the Nati Frinj, a biennial arts festival started in 2000 by local artists who needed an event to attract funding for projects they had planned. The Frinj involves up to 4,000 people these days, including local residents, and aims to contribute to Natimuk’s evolution as an artistic mecca and its developing reputation as a place of fine and surprising art events. The Nati Frinj features the large-scale multi-media performances, featuring aerial artists and huge projections on the giant wheat silos in the town. *Space and Place* was the first of these, a collection of poetic images that play with the extremes of the Wimmera, a performance that explored relationships to land and space, and what gives us our sense of place.

More traditional, community-based organizations are also based there, such as Arapiles Community Theatre that has staged successful musical theatre productions and is now extending its vision to support performing arts in a variety of genres as well as arts within other disciplines such as the visual arts and film.

Other factors that contribute to the success of the Natimuk artistic community are the ongoing support of the local council, Horsham Rural City, and peak body, Regional Arts Victoria, especially through its Regional Arts Development Officer program.

Unlike the previous case studies, where an instrumental outcome such as increased tourist revenue is a major value of the artistic endeavour, in the case of Natimuk, it is the art itself that is the outcome.

Natimuk and region have become a richer place by virtue of the arts being part of the environment.

www.natimuk.com/
<http://trafficlight.com.au/highlights/index.php?action=show&highlightid=6>
www.theage.com.au/news/Arts/A-matter-of-scale/2005/01/10/1105206048297.html
www.smh.com.au/travel/high-art-20081113-5zy0.html?page=-1

New Zealand: Regeneration through “building” on built environment

Rural Art Deco Maniototo, Ranfurly, New Zealand



Photos: Left: The Green House, Ranfurly (Image: Ian Dougherty). Centre: The 1948 Centennial Milk Bar building doubles as an Art Deco museum and as a base for an artist-in-residence programme (Image: Ian Dougherty). Right: Art Deco Weekend.

Summary: This case study describes the small town of Ranfurly in rural New Zealand that built on its unique asset of primarily Art Deco-style architecture and reinvented itself as a cultural tourism destination. While organizers recognize the significant economic benefits of the project, they also recognize social and environmental outcomes such as increased pride in local area and valuing of the built environment.

Context: The small town of Ranfurly (population 800) in rural New Zealand was established in 1898 as a railhead for the Central Otago railway line. New buildings were erected to accommodate the town's enhanced status as the main centre of the Maniototo region. Other new buildings appeared as a result of a succession of fires in the 1930s. Many of the town's new edifices were constructed in the fashionable Art Deco style of the time. Their relative cheapness suited the state of economic depression, as did the way in which moulded shapes, relief decorations, and vivid colours could be easily used to beautify the buildings.

However, from the late 1980s, Ranfurly experienced decline and closure. The rural economy slumped and the railway line no longer carried trains. The local council transferred headquarters to another town and government agencies such as the post office closed. Businesses went the same way, including the town's only petrol station. When the local sawmill shut down, 26 families left town.

In 1999, locals identified the need for a revitalization strategy, and the opportunity of a key asset in the handsome Art Deco-styled buildings. Headed by local politician Edna McAtamney, a community-based project was established to manage and develop this cultural heritage resource. Through this initiative, most of Ranfurly's Art Deco buildings were restored with discounted paint supplied by local shops and manufacturers.⁴

The derelict 1948 Art Deco Centennial Milk Bar was transformed, largely by voluntary labour, into an Art Deco museum featuring exhibits from the Maniototo area. The Museum has attracted 35,000 visitors since it opened in 2000, and achievements include the production of an *Art Deco Walk* brochure that showcases the town's architecture. The annual Art Deco Weekend every February attracts up to 8,000 visitors, which is more than visit the town

during the entire six-week Christmas holiday period. Festival participants dressed in the art deco theme enjoy a variety of activities, including a car rally, jazz and cabaret event, Gatsby picnics, a piglet race, and duck shoot.

Indicators of the substantial economic well-being generated by this initiative include the refurbishment of about 20 buildings in the town, new tourist-oriented businesses including a backpackers lodge in the former post office building, guest houses (one with an Art Deco theme), several additional home stays, a couple of cafés, a couple of second-hand shops (one specialising in Art Deco objects), Art Deco tours in vintage cars, and a craft shop. The petrol station has re-opened, the disused railway station has been turned into an information centre, and the railyards and goods shed are being converted into an Art Deco agricultural machinery display. The previous housing surplus has become, over five years, a housing shortage. The interest in tourism has in turn encouraged the conversion of the ribbon of former railway land into the Otago Central Rail Trail, which brings a steady procession of hiking, biking, and horse-riding visitors to the town.

While organizers recognize the significant economic benefits of the project, they also recognize social and environmental outcomes. As Edna McAtamney says,

The social benefits have been even more outstanding. It's really great to see your community standing up, instead of people walking along the street, shoulders down. ... And the process of becoming tourist attractions and tourism facilities has also enhanced the long-term prospects of Ranfurly's Art Deco buildings, which comprise a unique feature of rural New Zealand.

www.historic.org.nz/magazinefeatures/2003summer/2003_summer_ranfurly.htm
www.maniototo.co.nz/art_deco.htm

Annex B.

Organizations supporting arts and creativity rural and remote communities in Australia

Regional Arts Australia and state bodies

Regional Arts Australia is the peak body for the Australia-wide network of regional arts organizations delivering arts programs in regional Australia: Country Arts SA, Country Arts WA, Queensland Arts Council, Regional Arts NSW, Regional Arts Victoria, Tasmanian Regional Arts, and the Northern Territory Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts.

Regional Arts Australia acts on behalf of the communities and artists of regional, rural, and remote Australia in representing and resolving at a national level the issues, concerns, and resource needs pivotal to the development and maintenance of a viable regional arts industry and a vibrant cultural life.

www.regionalarts.com.au/raa1/default.asp

Activities include:

Regional Arts Australia's 2006 national conference, "The Pacific Edge," September 2006

Regional Arts Australia, hosted by Queensland Arts Council, Mackay, Queensland

Regional Arts Australia biennial conference, "The Pacific Edge," features a wealth of local arts and cultural activities, provides debate and discussion on the current concerns of arts in regional communities, showcases and celebrates the achievements of artists involved in regional arts practice, and provides an opportunity to celebrate and become immersed in Australia's regional arts.

The conference program was devised around the current key priority areas identified in Regional Arts Australia's national policy document *2006 National Directions: Regional Arts*.

- Building strong communities
- Connections across the Pacific Rim
- Young people with creative futures
- Art as a powerful agent for change
- Indigenous people and communities
- Reaching new audiences
- Arts partnerships and collaborations
- Innovative communication

Previous conferences have been in: Mt. Gambier, South Australia in 1998; Esperance, Western Australia in 2000; Albury, New South Wales in 2002; Horsham, Victoria in 2004

www.qac.org.au/htm/2006RAAConference.asp

www.regionalarts.com.au

Regional Arts Australia's 2008 national conference, "Art at the Heart," 3-5 October 2008

Regional Arts Conference, hosted by the Northern Territory Government, Alice Springs
www.artattheheart.com.au/ah/1.asp (accessed 23/02/09)

A total of 950 delegates, including 192 conference presenters and 254 festival artists from a diverse cultural backgrounds and geographic areas from regional and remote Australia, met in the desert town of Alice Springs for Regional Arts Australia's sixth biennial conference *art at the heart*. The conference provided artists, arts workers, and arts volunteers the opportunity to gather, discuss, perform, and celebrate the arts and cultural achievements of regional Australia. Approximately 45% of presenters were Indigenous and the Artistic program featured a rate of 40:60 Indigenous to non-Indigenous artists.

Thirteen people from across Australia received the prestigious new national Regional Arts Australia Volunteer Award at a ceremony under the stars at the Alice Springs Telegraph Station on Saturday 4 October during the art at the heart conference dinner. The awards are brand new and are designed to give volunteers national recognition for their contribution towards the arts across regional, rural, and remote Australia.

The conference explored key areas of interest for the arts in regional and remote Australia through the themes:

- Place and identity
- Arts partnerships, collaborations, and exchanges
- Sustaining participation in the arts
- Creativity, innovation, and change

Regional Leadership Forums (2004 and late 2005)

Queensland Arts Council and Southern Cross University, Queensland, Australia

A series of community conversations conducted during 2004 to foster debate and interaction with the creative thinkers of regional Queensland. The Regional Leadership Forums brought together a broad cross-section of volunteer and professional arts workers, local government councilors, staff and mayors, as well as practicing artists.

Discussions ranged widely across themes of isolation, access, partnerships, and effective use of resources.

www.qac.org.au/htm/RegionalLeadershipForums.asp

Cultural development or community arts peak bodies in each state:

Cultural Development Network Victoria – www.culturaldevelopment.net.au

Community Arts Network Western Australia – www.canwa.com.au

Darwin Community Arts – www.darwincommunityarts.org.au

Community Arts Network South Australia – www.cansa.on.net

Community Cultural Development NSW – www.ccdnsw.org/ccdnsw/default.php

Arts Nexus, Far North Queensland – www.artsnexus.com.au/index.htm

Arts Access Australia supporting arts for disability

www.artsaccessaustralia.org

and state bodies including:

Accessible Arts NSW – www.aarts.net.au

Arts Access Darwin – www.darwincommunityarts.org.au/node/30

Arts Access SA – www.artsaccess-sa.org.au

Arts Access Victoria – www.artsaccess.com.au

Disability in the Arts, Disadvantage in the Arts, Australia WA – www.dadaawa.org.au

Arts Ability ACT – www.actartsofficers.org.au

Arts Access Central Australia – <http://inciteya.org.au/?section=artsaca>

Access Arts QLD – www.accessarts.org.au

Arts Action Tasmania – www.artsaccessaustralia.org

Rural Cultural Research Program

Project Coordinators: Prof Kate Darian-Smith and Dr Chris Gibson

This three-year (2006-2008) program of activities in rural cultural research included workshops, symposia, and masterclasses. Outcomes included a substantial web-based resource database, grant applications, and publications.

The overarching aims of the program were:

- To bring together scholars from cultural studies, history and geography whose research interests fall into “rural cultural research”
- To explore new interdisciplinary models for rural cultural research: How can we define the methodological, interpretative, and political parameters of this field of interdisciplinary cultural research?

- To enrich partnerships between universities and rural communities, and between universities, communities, and relevant cultural institutions
- To initiate new interdisciplinary research partnerships between metropolitan and regional universities, encompassing the support of postgraduate and early career researchers, including those in non-metropolitan locations
- To open up Australian-based research in rural cultural research to international comparisons and research links, and in doing so encourage Australian-based research to have international impact

This project examined how people make sense of their lived experience and locality, and how this is shaped by and influenced by government policy and planning (e.g., in relation to transport, communications, and consumption infrastructure; migration patterns; cultural activities, festivals, and creative industries; and so on).

The research examined new, continuing (or changing) discourses of rurality, including:

- Progress and sustainability
- Equity and access
- Community
- Rural idyll (including sea changing and tree changing)
- Cosmopolitanism
- Aesthetics/landscape

Such discourses are framed within wider understandings of the interconnections between rurality, suburbanism and urbanism, and between localized and national “belonging,” citizenship, and identity.

Rural Cultural Research Website: Resources and Database

A database of resources and publications, and researchers working in the field (currently under development)

www.uq.edu.au/crn/projects/rural.html

Annex C.

Events and projects

Awakenings Festival, Horsham, Victoria, Australia

This festival is Australia's only regional arts and disability festival. It has been running for 10 years. The festival runs for 10 days and features workshops, outdoor activities, and theatre performances. In 2004, the festival combined with Regional Arts Australia's national conference Meeting Place in Horsham.

www.awakenings.horsham.net.au

Northern Exposure, Pilbara Region, Western Australia

This arts enterprise development project has been running since 2002 as a partnership with the Western Australian Rio Tinto Future Fund and three remote Pilbara WA Indigenous communities, Punmu, Parrngurr, and Kunwarritji. Outcomes of the project include long term artist residencies and skills development programs for fibre textiles, digital photography, dance, and music.

www.artsaccessaustralia.org/makingthejourney/northern_exposure.html

The Otago Arts Guide, Otago, New Zealand

The result of an initiative involving five local authorities in New Zealand, the Guide maps the whereabouts of Otago's artists and creative practitioners and profiles Otago's creative industries sector to local and international visitors.

www.otagoartsguide.co.nz

ArtsConnect9, an initiative of the Arts Centre,

for Victorian regional students in Year 9 to experience the very best their Arts precinct in Melbourne has to offer. Program partners include:

- The Arts Centre & the Alfred Brash SoundHouse
- ACCA – Australian Centre for Contemporary Art
- ACMI – Australian Centre for the Moving Image
- NGV – National Gallery of Victoria
- SLV – State Library of Victoria

www.theartscentre.com.au/artsconnect9

Northern Rivers Screenworks, Northern Rivers region, New South Wales, Australia

Northern Rivers Screenworks is the screen industry office for the Northern Rivers region of New South Wales. Established in 2000, the organization was established to serve the needs of screen industry practitioners in the area. The organization holds regular creative industry development workshops, in partnership with Arts Northern Rivers, the Northern Rivers Regional Development Board, Northern Rivers Screenworks Ltd., and the North Coast Entertainment Industry Association.

These workshops aim to help individuals and organisations to create practical strategies to strengthen the area's creative businesses and improve market access.
www.screenworks.com.au

Kim Dunphy

Kim Dunphy is Program Manager at the Cultural Development Network (CDN) in Melbourne, Australia. CDN works to support the cultural vitality of communities throughout the state of Victoria, through four main activity areas: networking, public programs, projects and advocacy. Kim and colleagues have recently completed a major research project for the Victorian State Government, examining ways that participation in the arts for people with a disability can be increased. CDN recently acted as guest editor of a recent edition of the *UNESCO Journal for Multi-Disciplinary Research in The Arts* on the theme of “Creative Local Communities: Cultural Vitality and Human Rights.” Kim is also a PhD candidate at Deakin University in where she is exploring the outcomes of community-based arts programs, especially those initiated by international aid programs in Timor-Leste.

Developing and Revitalizing Rural Communities Through Arts and Creativity:

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Patrick Overton, PhD
Front Porch Institute
Astoria, Oregon

Prepared for the Creative City Network of Canada, March 2009



The Wildwood Barn, Menominee, Michigan

Cover photo: **The Wildwood Barn, Menominee, Michigan**

The Wildwood Barn – a Rural Mural, a project in Menominee, MI, of the Rural Arts and Culture Program (Michigan State University Museum and Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs). This project is one of the case studies presented in this paper. The Project was featured in *ROOTED IN PLACE: Cultivating Community Culture* (2002, Michigan State University Museum). *ROOTED* includes essays on doing cultural work and vignettes of projects and activities that focus on the richness and diversity of arts and culture in small, rural, and remote communities across Michigan and challenges the assumption that art/culture is only found in big cities.

Photo by Rick Ebhard, *EagleHerald*, Marinette, WI, and Menominee, MI, courtesy of the Michigan State University Museum.

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The project was conducted by the Centre for Policy Studies on Culture and Communities at Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, BC.

The project papers are available on the Creative City Network of Canada website: www.creativecity.ca

Abstract

Most work in the area of creative economies and cultural development focuses on large metropolitan areas. Yet, in the United States, thousands of rural/small communities (populations 25,000 or less) face many of these same issues without having the human and financial capital resources these large population centers have more readily available to them to find and implement solutions. The National Trust of Historic Places estimates that over 80% of the national landscape of the United States is rural. While this represents a large majority of the actual land space of the United States, the way in which people understand this space as being rural or small is varied. For these purposes, whenever the term *rural* is used in this paper, it will be accompanied by the term *small (rural/small)*, providing a wider definition that is not limited just to population density or geographical location but also the nature of the community as well.

Over the past 25 years, many rural/small communities have faced the loss of traditional economic resources they have counted on for decades. To complicate matters, this economic loss has been unexpectedly combined with a dramatic influx of new citizens in many rural communities, especially those within one or two hours of large metropolitan/urban communities, resulting in rising property taxes, and increased demand for social services. All of these challenges are threatening to destroy the cultural infrastructure and “sense of place” that has historically defined these communities. Many of the citizens who live in rural/small communities find themselves at a crossroads and many are unsure just what direction to take. While this can be viewed as a “problem to be solved,” it also creates a parallel “opportunity to maximize potential good” that might come from this transition. But whatever approach is taken, the core, central word that must be understood in describing rural/small communities is *transition*.

This research paper provides a wide-lens view of the changing cultural landscape of America’s rural/small communities in the twenty-first century in five sections. Section 1 provides a broad overview the contemporary cultural context of rural/small communities in the United States. It includes a short historical background of the relationship between arts and culture in rural/small communities; a brief overview of the contemporary, twenty-first century overview of community cultural development in rural/small communities; the emergence and impact of public funding for community cultural development in rural/small communities; and, finally, the challenge and opportunity of rural/small community transition. Section 2 addresses overarching issues facing rural/small communities in the United States focusing on the relationship between *Sense of Place* and *Poetry of Place* and the emergence of a new localism and a new regionalism in rural/small communities. Section 3 addresses the various ways in which community cultural development and concepts related to creative economies translate into the rural/small community context. Section 4 provides a short summary conclusion. Finally, Section 5 (Annex A) cites numerous examples of rural/small community arts and cultural development projects as well as significant public/private partnerships, offering a glimpse into the diversity of ways in some communities are responding to the opportunity in front of them.

Résumé

La plupart des travaux de recherche en matière d'économies créatives et de développement culturel mettent l'accent sur les grandes régions métropolitaines. Or, aux États-Unis, des milliers de collectivités rurales et de petites tailles (dont la population ne dépasse pas 25 000 habitants) font face à bien des enjeux semblables sans pourtant bénéficier de l'apport humain et des capitaux financiers dont profitent aisément ces régions plus peuplées, pour concevoir et mettre en œuvre des solutions. De fait, le National Trust of Historic Places évalue que les régions rurales occupent plus de 80 % de l'ensemble du territoire national aux États-Unis. Bien que cela représente la vaste majorité du territoire réel des États-Unis, la perception des gens concernant ce qui caractérise une région rurale ou petite diffère. Dans cet esprit, précisons que lorsque le terme rural est utilisé dans cette étude, il est jumelé au terme petit (rural/petit) afin de présenter une définition élargie qui ne se limite pas à la seule densité de population ou à l'emplacement géographique, mais qui tient également compte de la nature même de la collectivité.

Depuis les 25 dernières années, nombre de communautés rurales/ petites ont été confrontées à l'érosion des ressources économiques traditionnelles dont elles profitaient depuis des décennies. Pour compliquer les choses, cette perte économique est survenue au moment même où une vague importante de nouveaux résidents déferlait sur nombre de collectivités rurales, particulièrement celles étant situées à une heure ou deux des grandes métropoles et des collectivités urbaines, occasionnant du même coup une hausse de l'impôt foncier et une diminution de la demande pour des services sociaux. Dans leur ensemble, ces enjeux menacent l'infrastructure culturelle et le sentiment d'« appartenance au lieu » qui, historiquement, a été le propre de ces collectivités. Nombreux sont les citoyens qui, résidant dans les collectivités rurales/petites se retrouvent à la croisée des chemins et ne savent pas dans quelle direction s'orienter. Bien que cette situation puisse être considérée comme un « problème à régler », elle est également porteuse de « l'occasion de maximiser ce qui est potentiellement bon » dans une telle transition. Quelle que soit l'approche choisie, il n'en demeure pas moins que le mot clé à retenir, celui qui définit les collectivités rurales/petites est transition.

Ce rapport de recherche propose une vision élargie des changements au sein du paysage culturel communautaire des collectivités rurales/petites d'Amérique au vingt-et-unième siècle, et il se divise en cinq sections. La section 1 propose une vue d'ensemble du contexte actuel de la culture au sein des collectivités rurales et de petites tailles aux États-Unis. La section 2 soulève des questions de première importance auxquelles font face les collectivités rurales et de petites tailles aux États-Unis. Elle met l'accent sur le lien entre le « sentiment d'appartenance » et la « poésie du lieu », et l'émergence d'un néo-localisme et d'un nouveau régionalisme au sein de ces collectivités. La section 3 se penche sur les façons dont le développement culturel communautaire et les concepts propres aux économies créatives se concrétisent, dans le contexte des collectivités rurales et de petites tailles. La section 4 présente un bref résumé des conclusions. La section 5 (Annex A) cite une multitude d'exemples de développement culturel au sein des collectivités rurales et de petites tailles, ainsi que des exemples majeurs de partenariats public/privé. Il ne s'agit ici que d'un bref aperçu de la diversité des moyens auxquels ont recours certaines collectivités pour répondre aux occasions qui se présentent à elles.

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Developing and Revitalizing Rural Communities Through Arts and Creativity:

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Introduction

Rural/small communities in the United States are in the middle of one of the most significant cultural transitions that has taken place within the last century. For the first three quarters of the twentieth century, a significant population shift occurred from rural to urban areas. Many rural/small communities were dependent on one major industry or business, unique to their geographical location, and those businesses started either to decline, move to larger populated areas or, in many cases, just simply ceased to exist. Many geographically isolated rural/small communities never survived this transition.

The purpose of this introductory paragraph is not to provide a historical timeline as much as to delineate a significant shift toward understanding the arts and culture of a community as more than just contributing to what people refer to as the *quality of life*. Early community cultural development practitioners understood that the way a community understood itself, celebrated itself, and expressed itself was a major contributing factor to that community's ability to withstand economic, political, and cultural winds of change and transition.

That being said, this research focuses mainly on the emergence of a growing trend toward understanding specific ways in which the heritage, arts, and culture of a community can make significant contributions to overall community development but also specifically to the economic development and vitality of a rural/small community. But before any meaningful research can be accomplished, trends identified, or resources explored as they relate to rural/small communities, those engaged in research on this subject, as well as those doing community cultural development (at the local community level or from outside the community), need to come to an agreement on shared vocabulary on this subject – in particular, just what the term *rural* means.

In the United States, the tendency is to consider any community under 50,000 population as rural. According to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, rural/small towns in America with a population under 50,000 represent over 80% of the nation's landscape. They estimate some 55 million people live in these communities that contain a diverse array of historic, arts,

and cultural resources. While this percentage drops when you go below communities of less than 25,000 or even 10,000, it is still a significant percentage of the U.S. population base.

However, population size is only one variable one needs to take into account when using the term *rural*. As noted in Overton (1987),

A major obstacle that exists in developing national and state policy is terminology and identifying a common baseline that can be used not only by everyone in one country, but across national boundaries as well. For some, the term rural conjures up open spaces, freedom, and rugged individualism. For others, the term rural creates an image of poor, culturally deprived, back roads existence. The term 'rural' represents a diversity of meaning and yet is often used to describe everything outside the metropolitan areas. (p. 3)

For the purposes of this research project, the term *rural* has been combined with the term *small* so that any reference to rural is accomplished with the term *rural/small*. This is not to equivocate on the definition or to surrender to the lack of a clear, unified definition. Rather, recognizing the purpose of this project is to provide a broad, sweeping assessment of community cultural development and the role of creative economies in this setting, the issues related to a clear lack of a definition do not seem appropriate.

In addition to the term *rural*, there is also little continuity in what is meant by the term *arts* or *culture* as it exists in a rural/small community setting. Until a common vocabulary can be identified and adopted, research on this important subject is limited by the particular cultural perspective, or perhaps even bias, that exists by those conducting the research. This author invites the readers of this paper to consider the value of doing the work necessary so that all of us can work with a common understanding when the terms *rural*, *arts*, and *culture* are used.

Finally, before moving on, the question must be posed as to the validity of using the term *creative economies* in the context of most rural/small communities. First, there are usually only a small number of arts/cultural organizations in rural/small communities, making it nearly impossible for these organizations to be the driver of the entire local economy. Second, the smaller the population size, the lower the number of arts and cultural organizations that exist within a community context and many of the rural/small communities in the United States are populations of well under 10,000. Third, it is not uncommon for there to be only one arts/cultural organization in a rural/small community, often a generic community arts organization that serves as both the presenter and producer of whatever arts experiences are available within that community. Finally, the organization that provides these arts/cultural services/programs may not be an arts or cultural organization at all but other kinds of community-based organizations such as chambers of commerce, schools, or community civic clubs. This is not to say this is the case in every rural/small community. There are some examples of very effective creative economies in rural/small communities all across the United States, but they are more an exception rather than the rule. However, when addressing the issue of direct economic impact of the arts in rural/small communities in the United States, it is important to take these variables into account.

This does not mean the arts/culture in these communities potentially has any less economic or community development impact than it does in larger communities. In fact, because there are often limited opportunities in rural/small communities, the overall impact of arts and culture

at the rural/small community level can be enormous – perhaps even more so than the larger metropolitan centers that have countless arts/cultural resources available to its population. What it does mean is that this impact is more likely to be indirect rather than direct. This recognizes the reality that the term *creative economy* is difficult to translate into the rural/small community context because most rural/small communities do not have enough of an arts industry to have a direct economic impact. Therefore, instead of using the term *creative economies*, the phrase *creating community* (using the word *creating* as an adjective) might be used to describe the kind of community it is, rather than the kind of economy that makes the community possible.

1 ■ Understanding the cultural context of rural/small communities in the United States

Most work in the area of creative economies and cultural development has historically focused on metropolitan centers. Yet, in the United States, hundred and thousands of rural/small communities face many of these same issues without having the resources metropolitan communities have more readily available to them to find solutions. From the beginning of these rural/small communities, they have struggled to experience the contribution that arts, heritage, and culture can make to their communities in the same way as their fellow citizens who live in larger urban population centers. Life is different in these rural/small communities. So is the creative, cultural context in which these communities were brought into existence and exist today.

1.1. Brief historical overview

The purpose of this paper is not to provide an in-depth history of the development of arts and cultural development in rural/small communities in the United States, but it is impossible to understand the contemporary cultural context of rural/small communities without recognizing the unique historical developments that preceded this century. Recognizing space limitations, the following list of major historical movements, leaders, and dates provides a basis for further research if one is interested.

The major *community cultural development* movement in the United States is synonymous with individual self-education and community self-determination. The early history begins with the Lyceum (Josiah Holbrook in 1826), development of the Redpath Lyceum Bureaus (1867), the Chautauqua movement (John Heyl Vincent – 1974), the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circles (1878), formation of independent/little Chautauquas (1890), and the Tent Chautauqua Circuit (Keith Vawter – 1902).

The development of the contemporary *community arts* movement at the beginning of the twentieth century begins with public education and presentation of drama in high schools (J. Milnor Dorey – 1903), theatre in colleges and universities (George Pierce Baker – 1905), development of the community theatre/little theatre movement (Percy MacKaye – 1910 and Louise Burleigh – 1917), the formation of the drama league/little theatre movement (1915), the Little Country Theatre (Alfred Arvold – 1923), and college and university extension/arts development programs (Robert E. Gard / Baker Brownell – 1940s).

Finally, the development of the *community arts council* movement which includes the formation of the National Endowment for the Arts in 1965, the development of state arts agencies and the National Assembly of Community Arts Agencies (1982), and eventually the formation of statewide assemblies beginning in the 1980s.

One can understand the contemporary community cultural development context without knowing the details of any of the historical movements or figures listed in this very brief account. But without having at least some knowledge of the movements and their emphasis on self-education and community self-determination, it is impossible to understand what sets aside community cultural development in rural/small communities in the United States. It is a unique history with a very clearly documented history.

As noted in *Rebuilding the Front Porch of America: Essays on the Art of Community Making*,

The history of community arts development movement in rural and small communities is a long, rich heritage of innovative individuals, philosophical traditions, and creative community efforts, whose existence continues to change the inscape of Americans rural/small communities. Each region has its own unique history and heroes that need to be identified and celebrated. Each community has its own cultural roots that need to be remembered, restored, and honored. Each organization has its own heroes as well. (Overton, 1997, p. 62)

Rebuilding the Front Porch of America identifies four important patterns that have been present through all of this history from 1826 to the present. First, the pattern of creativeness and innovation at the rural/small community level that translates into new ways to meet community needs (long before the creative economy movement emerged in urban areas). Second, the pattern of individuals outside rural/small communities who took early efforts at self-improvement and self-expression and turned them into money-making ventures that changes the value of art from process and participation to that of commodity or product. Third, the emergence of individuals such as Arvold, Gard, and Brownell who recognized the role of arts and culture to provide a basic, necessary cultural framework for people in rural/small communities to understand who they are and why they are that way. The final pattern is the long standing “dis-ease” and conflicted relationship between the arts in rural/small communities and the church. This has pervaded the history of arts and culture in the United States and, to this day, represents one of the largest and most challenging barriers to promoting arts and culture in rural/small communities.

Anyone interested in learning more about these important historical movements and U.S. community arts development pioneers, please see *Rebuilding the Front Porch of America*. The essay “Porches and Parlors” provides a more detailed review of this history (Overton, 1997, p. 47) and the bibliography at end of book will provide additional resources for further research.

1.2. Public support for arts and culture in rural/small communities

Many of the funding mechanisms to support arts and culture that were put in place between 1985 and 2008 in the United States have started to disappear. Special “rural/small community” initiatives that were premiered with such great promise in the 1970s and 1980s have dwindled or disappeared altogether. The state of Michigan, a pioneer in addressing rural/small community concerns, just closed its rural program citing lack of funding and low

application turnout. This program was one of the model programs in the United States. While there has also been an emergence of new funding initiatives, most notably the Wallace Foundation's effort at increasing audience participation in rural/small communities, with the decrease of public funding, no one knows how that is going to play out over the next few years. All of this must be put in the context that, in the United States, the major of support for community cultural development has come through the various state arts agencies and the budgets for these organizations have significantly decreased over the past decade.

The irony of the developments over the past 15 to 20 years is that it is in the rural/small communities where the arts and cultural development of a community can have a direct and verifiable impact. The challenge of promoting the arts in these communities is not the problem of lack of funding from outside the community or low audience attendance as much as it is breaking through the negative self-image many of these rural communities have of themselves.

1.3. Rural/small communities in transition in the twenty-first century

Today, every community, regardless of its size, finds itself facing periods of transition. Many rural/small communities are facing the loss of traditional economic resources they have counted on for decades, as natural resources decline and outside-owned extraction industries close mills, mines, and other rural-based operations. When these resources disappear, the loss of jobs is significant and the damage to the local economy enormous. Many of these communities are one-company towns, basically brought into existence to support the mining and the extraction process. As the industry ends, so does the economic stability and sustainability of these communities, which often results in population losses for these rural/small communities. While this has been going on for some time, the latest economic downturn in the United States (and global) economy has certainly increased this challenge for many rural/small communities across the nation.

In parallel with the decline of these natural (extraction) resources, rural/small communities are also losing their rich, agricultural land. Many rural/small communities within 50-100 miles of major metropolitan communities are being confronted with a rapidly growing new reality: a sudden and overwhelming influx of people who have chosen to live outside the urban area where they work, seeking what they believe will be a richer quality of life, or "the rural experience" (often vaguely conceptualized). These migrants no longer want the urban experience, and they are willing to try something new. This urban-to-rural movement could be called "New Rurbanism."

These new citizens often purchase what used to be agricultural land used for dairy farming or crops. An example is Richmond Township, a community just outside New Richmond, Wisconsin. Not that long ago, there were 333 dairy farms; there are now only 3 dairy farms and the population has increased 60% in just the past 15 years.

These *rural/urbans* are starting to have significant impact on many communities that, prior to this point in their history, have remained fairly small, self-sustaining, and geographically isolated. That sense of isolation no longer exists and there are few rural communities that are being spared this increase of people seeking the "rural experience" while still being connected to and working in the urban setting.

The potential impact on rural/small communities is deep and long-lasting. A clear cycle occurs: population size increases dramatically; housing prices soar, often placing home ownership out of reach for those whose families represent generations of people who have lived in that community; costs for education rise steeply, placing demands on what are many times already outdated and over-utilized facilities and challenging the school district's ability to provide the quality education people have come to expect in small communities; people no longer know their neighbors and eventually a huge "disconnect" between people in the community begins to develop; and the "small town" *sense of place* begins to disappear and people find themselves experiencing a level of discomfort they cannot explain.

As the tension from these changes increases, so does the distance between the various individuals and groups within the community. The overall quality of life in the community everyone cherishes and takes for granted begins to diminish. Sometimes, when the situation continues too long, a community finds itself in a state of confusion and tension becomes the norm, leading to open conflict, increased incivility, and confrontation within the community. One important outcome of this "stress cycle" is the people within the community best able to address these changes and conflicts end up exhausted and frustrated because they cannot seem to make a difference, leading to the development of an overwhelming sense of total "community-wide citizen burnout."

Decisions made before and during this transition often define a community for years to come. Unfortunately, many times these decisions are made in reaction to what is going on rather than in anticipation of these developments and often do not provide what is needed for the community and its leaders to make informed decisions to navigate through the turmoil and maintain effective and constructive community "self-determination." As a result, the planning process ends up addressing "symptoms" rather than the deeper problems they represent.

The accelerated rate of change and transition has also led to an increasing lack of civility has found its way into the day-to-day public conversations, moving from friendly sharing to intense and dramatic debate, making citizen interaction uncomfortable and difficult to maintain. This, in turn, has eroded public trust in local government, often creating discomfort and an increased incivility, producing a negative community communication climate. Thus, the general cultural context of rural/small communities is undergoing enormous change and transition, and so are the citizens who live in these communities.

These issues need to be addressed. Not only because rural/small communities already face enormous challenges, but because these challenges will only increase over the next few decades. These communities face enormous pressure to preserve their cultural values and there is serious disintegration of not only their cultural facilities but their very social infrastructure as well. In an article in *The Rural Arts Challenge: To Cultivate and Preserve*, Julie Avery¹ states:

There is increasing concern for the future of our rural, remote, and small communities. From environmentalists and city planners to sociologists and cultural leaders, voices are raising the issue on the basis of the seeming dichotomy between progress and preservation. (p. 116)

¹ Julie Avery is curator of history and administrator of the Michigan State University Museum, and editor of *Rooted in Place: Cultivating Community Culture*.

Avery has pinpointed the challenge to rural/small communities – how to change, move forward, be open to, and maximize the opportunities made possible through the transition influences, and yet still find the way keep hold of that very essence of who they are as a community. This is the challenge of preserving their *poetry of place* (Overton, 2003).

2. Shifting frameworks for thinking about rural/small communities

Two sets of general patterns or trends are evident among rural/small communities in the United States. First, from within individual communities, there is a need to identify and balance the community's *sense of place* and its *poetry of place* in the context of transition. Second, from a broader perspective two parallel trends are emerging: a new sense of *regionalism* and a *new localism*.

2.1. Balancing a community's "sense of place" and its "poetry of place"

Wallace Stegner, a well-known Wisconsin author, described the importance of a community's *sense of place* (Stegner, 1986). While Stegner includes the way a community interacts with each other in his description, most people have come to think of a community's *sense of place* more as the geography of a place rather than its population. When Stegner introduced this phrase, he was identifying something that has a powerful impact on the development of a community. The geographic landscape that surrounds people influences how a community develops by defining its economy and its role in the larger commerce of the region, based on the geographical resources available to that community. One way to understand *sense of place* is to define it as the way the geography of a place impacts the people who live in that place.

But geography/landscape is only one aspect of place that needs to be identified to fully understand the basic nature of a community. Another critical aspect of place is the intersection between the individual and the larger community in which he/she lives. This aspect of life in rural/small communities can be called *poetry of place*, defined as the impact people have on a place as a result of the way they interact with each other in the community setting (Overton, 1999). In other words, while *sense of place* defines how geography influences/impacts the people who live in a particular place, a community's *poetry of place* defines how the way people interact with each other influences/impacts the geography. It is the give and take, the dialectic, the balance between these two aspects of place that have the greatest influence in the development of a particular community giving each community what could be called its overall *essence of place*.

As people move into rural areas, they are not only changing the landscape of rural communities, they are changing the community's inscape as well, its *poetry of place*, and this is having a disturbing impact on the *essence of place* of these communities. Increasingly, people are no longer tied to one place or, for that matter, one job or profession. Individuals can live in a particular place and not be a part of the community in which they live. This makes them residents rather than citizens. Rural/small communities across the United States are experiencing this in a unique way as urban-to-rural migrants arrive in significant numbers.

What does this all mean? First, it means that a community has to pay attention to both its geography and its community social interaction. Second, every rural/small community in the U.S. right now has to come to grips with major changes coming their way or already present. Third, focusing on and promoting economic development may end up not being the most efficient strategy to help a community grow and prosper. At least, not the way we have traditionally defined economic development. It has become clear over the past decade that efforts to attract businesses and industries to a community must be based on efforts to attract people to a community because it is people that make businesses and industries function. When businesses are looking to locate, they are looking for more than land or adequate natural resources or good transportation arteries. They are looking for a location that provides a good place to live and to locate families. They are looking for a combination of a community's *sense of place* (the geography and its impact on the people) and its *poetry of place* (the people, the way they interact with each other, and the impact this has on the geography).

2.2. Emergence of a “new regionalism” and “new localism”

Two parallel trends seem to be developing in rural/small communities in addition to the urban-to-rural movement. One is a growing awareness of the need for communities to start cooperating and collaborating with each other. This collaboration and cooperation is expanding beyond the traditional boundaries between communities, including long-standing city/township, city/county, and county/county barriers. The result of this can be seen in the quiet emergence of a “new regionalism,” a self-determined and self-defined geographical and social boundary line, and seems to be strongest in areas that consist primarily of rural/small communities. This new regionalism encourages cooperation and collaboration between entities that historically have been competitive and uncooperative. As these collaborations increase, as traditional boundaries change, the historic lines of demarcation are dissolving and/or are being redefined and redrawn. While there are positive aspects to this change, it is not a simple or easy change to make.

The second trend, although not as obvious, is the emergence of what appears to be a “new localism.” As a new regionalism emerges, it is essential that each and every community be clear about who it is and what it needs, resulting in a clearly defined community sense of self. This is differentiated from the *past localism*, which was the result of either geographic isolation or self-protective/self-imposed actions to protect a community from outside forces influencing and co-opting its authority and autonomy – the City Fortress syndrome. The *new localism* is based on the desire of people to regain their community-based self-determination. For too long, influences outside the local rural/small community setting have determined what is done and how it is done. Frequently, outside trends have influenced a community without being clear what it does to the community or upon what authority it is doing it. What are needed are strategies to help these rural/small communities to promote self-determination and, more importantly, the right and responsibility of local citizens to use this self-determination to do what is best for their community. This is no less true today than when democracy was first introduced.

The emergence of these trends together – a *new regionalism* and a *new localism* – is presenting one of the most dynamic and interesting social and political convergences to impact rural/small communities in over a century. The reality is that every community, regardless of its location, is having the traditional boundary line between city, township, and

county undergoing some change. In fact, some contemporary efforts are crossing boundary lines separating different states, exploring ways in which communities on each side of the state boundaries can work together for mutual benefit. This appears to be especially true in rural areas. For some, it is a change driven by economic necessity. So much out-migration of citizens and resources have occurred in rural/small communities while, at the very same time, significant in-migration of new people and new resources has also occurred – that most communities simply can not exist on the same concept of *commerce* that brought it into existence. These emerging changes present enormous potential conflicts and opportunities at the same time.

The implications of these trends and the potential conflict they bring with them cannot be ignored. What we have not done in the United States is to clearly define the impact the rural/small communities have on the national commerce. When the impact of the demise of the industrial belt economy, the diminishing resources facing the extraction industry of the Midwest, and the decreasing natural resources and increasing challenges facing the timber and fishing industries of the northwest are combined, there is an economic and social “perfect storm” brewing. As rural/small communities attempt to address these issues with the traditional limited resources available to them, it is clear the loss of these old economies will continue to be a major challenge facing them.

Overall, the single largest challenge facing rural/small communities is their ability to continue to exist, to meet the changing needs of their citizens without giving up the essential part of who they are and why they came into existence. This challenge can be in addressed several ways. This paper proposes one of the most important ways to address these challenges is to address the essential contribution arts, heritage, and culture make to the very capacity of these communities to envision a new future. This places arts, heritage, and culture not as amenities to improve the quality of life, but rather the essential foundation upon which the future of these rural/small communities rests.

3. ■ Translating community cultural development and the creative economy movement into the rural/small community context

There are many factors that make cultural development in rural/small communities significantly different and many times more difficult. This section discusses cultural development in the rural/small community context by identifying these factors and then suggesting specific practice strategies to address them. Three general categories of factors are explored:

- (1) Population size, focusing on the various ways the impact of small populations and small organizations have on cultural development;
- (2) Ruralism, exploring the predominant negative rural self-image and historic external bias towards rural/small communities; and
- (3) Moving from extraction to expression economy, a translation of creative economy and cultural infrastructure strategies into the rural/small community context.

Suggestions of specific community cultural development strategies are listed following each of the issues identified. While some of these factors may be unique to rural/small communities in the United States, it is believed that most, if not all, can be translated into the context of rural/small communities in Canada.

3.1. Population impact on cultural development in rural/small communities

3.1.1. Decreasing population size of rural/small communities

Not only are most rural/small communities now small in population size, many of them have been losing population due to poor economic conditions. Fading industrial belt communities have experienced countless closed factories in the eastern portion of the United States. Diminishing natural resources have resulted in reduced extraction industry jobs in much of the midwest and western states. Federal limits to logging and the listing of salmon and other fish on the endangered species list have significantly reduced economic health in the northwestern states.

As mentioned in the Introduction, while the tendency in the U.S. is to use the population size of less than 50,000 to define rural/small communities, the reality is that most rural/small communities in the United States consist of population sizes considerably less. Further analysis of the data available shows that most rural/small communities consist of populations less than 10,000. This smaller population in rural/small communities results in significantly less of the financial, human, and social capital needed to make cultural development successful. For example, gaining support from just .05% of a population in a large city can result in considerable human and financial capital to pay for large cultural infrastructure growth and development. Gaining support from .05% of a rural/small community results in considerably less human and financial capital to support cultural development.

For example, the costs of cultural facilities – and other community infrastructure – are not directly dependent on geography or do they take population size or density into consideration. While large cities are likely to have larger facilities and perhaps more of them, the cost of constructing a performance theater is not significantly different between large and small population centers. In fact, when the costs of having adequate building supplies available and the workers needed to do the design and construction of the facilities in rural/small communities are factored in, it generally makes it more expensive to build even modest cultural facilities. When one adds the additional cost of building design and engineering, which are generally performed by firms outside the community and therefore more expensive, these combine to present a challenge for rural/small communities involved in cultural infrastructure facility building.

Suggested strategies re: Decreasing population size

- a. It is important to think outside the box and not to allow population density to limit the ability of a community to think big. The small population provides the opportunity to engage a larger percentage of the community in the planning and implementation process, creating opportunities for citizens to build a strong

ownership for the projects. Or, perhaps a better way to say this is to promote thinking “inside the box” because it is unlikely any resources from outside the community are going to suddenly present themselves soon.

- b. There is a great amount of wealth in rural/small communities. These communities are known for their resourcefulness and their innovativeness working with what they have within their community. Also, there is about to be a very large wealth transfer from the elder generation to their children and some of this wealth might just find its way into the general community good. The potential impact of this transfer is enormous.
 - c. It is important not to underestimate the ability of rural/small communities to accomplish any goal they set. The citizens of these communities are not afraid to try new things and they usually accomplish whatever it is they decide to do. What is required is a clear commitment, an understanding of the reasons why the project is important, and a strong tie-in to local community cultural values. Once these are in place, most communities find creative and innovative ways to accomplish things few people think are possible. It is what makes these communities special.
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3.1.2. Rapidly increasing population in rural/small communities

This situation is the opposite of the factor discussed above. As discussed previously, most of this rapid increase is the direct result of people from urban centers moving to rural/small communities within reasonable driving distance of where they work, causing property values and community service needs to increase while not contributing significantly to the increase of human and social capital. Many of these new citizens are residents rather than citizens of the community, choosing to not engage in the local community setting. Not only do these new residents change the local community cultural environment, their general lack of engagement raises serious questions about the ability of the local community to meet the needs of its increasing population.

As many of these rural/small communities addressed previous declines in population, there was a period of time with a great amount of deferred maintenance on existing cultural facilities and other community infrastructure. This was coupled with deferred philanthropic giving, and many rural/small communities currently find themselves in a situation with a hefty cultural infrastructure challenge. With this new increase of population, combined with the deferred maintenance and loss of traditional community gathering places, the need to look at creating new gathering places needs to be a priority. This is the right time to be talking about the important role that arts, heritage, and culture play in providing not only these gathering places but also some very positive contributions to the community at the same time. In many ways, the challenges presented by the rapid increase of population also presents opportunities that can move the cultural development agenda in rural/small communities forward in a positive and constructive manner.

Suggested strategies re: Rapid population increases

- a. Perhaps it is in improving the cultural infrastructure of a community, more than any other action, that makes an important difference in rural/small communities. Cultural facilities provide essential “gathering places” where people can meet, interact, and get to know each other. Once people understand this, they are usually willing to work to make it happen. It is not easy, but it can make a significant difference.
 - b. The arts, heritage, and culture of a community can be a wonderful way to recreate history and help new people in the community learn about the heritage, cultural traditions, and heroes that made the community what it is today. Providing ways to connect new citizens to this community story is also an excellent way to reconnect long-term citizens to their story as well, reminding them of the rural genius² that made it happen.
 - c. Getting new citizens involved in this process encourages them to have a broader, deeper engagement in the democracy of civil discourse. By working side-by-side with long-term citizens, the cultural development process provides cultural bridges between the two groups, creating a stronger sense of community. It is also a great way to get them involved in the community, meeting new people and helping develop a sense of being a *citizen* rather than a *resident*.
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3.1.3. Small number of arts/cultural organizations in rural/small communities

Generally, there are not very many arts organizations in rural/small communities. The smaller the population size, the lower the number of arts and cultural organizations. In fact, it is not uncommon for there to be only one organization, a community arts organization that is both presenter and producer of whatever arts experiences are available. Sometimes the organization that provides these services may not be an arts or cultural organization at all but organizations such as a chamber of commerce or community civic club. The other arts experiences available are small, single owner “for-profit” ventures including dance studios, visual arts galleries, and presenting/concert series programs.

This does not mean the arts/culture in these communities potentially has any less impact than larger communities. It means the impact is likely to be more indirect than direct. There are many ways in which arts/cultural events in rural/small communities can have direct economic development impact. As communities become known for particular fairs, festivals, historic exhibits and reenactments, and performance events, people will travel to that community. As they do, they bring with them outside dollars that will be spent on food and gas and accommodations. This can have tremendous direct economic impact on a community and should be considered a viable strategy to broaden the economic development base within a community.

² Rural genius is defined by the author as “one of the most important natural resources we have – the fuel that has driven of the United States from the moment the first native American walked the ground and the first Puritan set foot on our soil. It is the creativeness and innovation that has brought into existence the society in which we now live and keeps it sustained” (Overton, 1997).

This being said, it is also important for a rural/small community to be clear about the potential indirect impacts this kind of economic development strategy potentially may have on the community. While it is infrequent, sometimes cultural tourism can end up becoming the major economic development strategy with all local resources being geared to that strategy. In the process, sometimes both the *sense of place* and the *poetry of place* may end up negatively impacted by the predominant focus on outside resources coming into the community.

Suggested strategies re: Low number of arts/cultural organizations

- a. It is important for arts/cultural organizations to assess their capacity before they take on major direct and indirect economic development projects. Sometimes the projects being considered are great but the organizational resource capacity just is not there to pull it off.
 - b. It is important to provide technical assistance and organizational development resources that are specifically geared to these organizations to help them build capacity and become more stable and sustainable within the local, rural/small community context in which they exist.
 - c. It is important not to limit funding support to traditional, community-based arts and cultural organizations – this model is not always present in the rural/small community setting. It is important to give communities the opportunity to self-identify and self-define their cultural resources and then create new, innovative partnerships and collaborations to maximize these local resources.
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3.1.4. Loss of human capital and increased average age of volunteers

There appear to be two trends emerging. First, the number of volunteers contributing their time in rural/small communities is diminishing. Conversely, the average age of the ones who are volunteering is increasing. These two trends are going to reach a critical stage in the next five years and will significantly impact the ability of rural/small community non-profit, community-based arts and cultural organizations to function effectively. While there are limited numbers of arts and cultural organizations to serve rural/small communities, there is a greater crisis just around the corner relating to the diminishing human capital that is available to help these non-profits survive. The non-profit organization is premised on the concept of volunteerism, especially the community-based arts and cultural organizations.

Many rural/small community arts and cultural organizations consist of members who are well over 60 years old. And few rural/small community organizations have the financial resources to pay for people to do the jobs that have been historically performed by volunteers. The issue of losing volunteers and not being able to recruit new, younger volunteers is not new, but it is reaching a critical stage as current volunteers age and are no longer willing or able to perform these duties. If something is not done to address this issue, the arts and cultural organizations simply will not be able to continue. This raises serious questions about the very survival of the cultural ecology of rural/small communities.

There are many reasons for this decline of volunteers. The first is the fact that much of the baby boomer generation has not, as yet, stepped forward to take up its responsibilities for giving back to the community. Second, many rural/small community organizations are very small and it is difficult to break into that social structure, especially if you are new to the community. Finally, many people who have worked their lives in the “for-profit” world just are not excited about getting involved in outdated organizations that are dysfunctional. New models and functional organizations/systems need to be created to maximize resources and implement innovative ways to address the unique and changing needs of rural/small communities and the arts/cultural organizations that serve them.

Suggested strategies re: Reduction of human capital

- a. Up to this point in the history of rural/small communities, most of the work of arts and cultural organizations has been self-sustaining. But the time has come to address this issue head on by developing aggressive and targeted programming to address organizational capacity building. This includes creating effective recruiting programs for volunteers. Once these people are in place, it is important to create effective training programs for these new volunteers. Many organizations do not provide this kind of training, throwing their new volunteers into difficult situations with little, if any, background or training. This makes retention difficult.
 - b. Arts and cultural organizations in rural/small communities need to do a better job of communicating who they are, what they do, and why they do it. Organizations need to create meaningful cultural plans that do not focus on why the arts and cultural organizations need support but rather how the arts and cultural organizations contribute to the community.
 - c. Rural/small community non-profits are going to need to change the way they do their business. They have to streamline their structures, liven up their programming, and enable people to enter and leave the organization more easily. It is unlikely people are going to continue to give their lives to just one organization. We need to recognize this short-burst approach and not consider it representative of a lower level of commitment, just a different kind of commitment.
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3.2. Ruralism: Addressing the internal rural self-image and external bias that exists towards rural/small communities

3.2.1. Failure to honour the history of arts in rural/small communities

There is a long and important history of arts and culture in rural/small communities but it is a history unique to that setting. It is a history that celebrates self-improvement and self-education. It is a history that is based on people participating in and experiencing the arts on a personal basis. It is a history that related the arts and cultural experience to what was happening at the local level and when it did bring in arts from outside the community, it was done for the purpose of self-education and self-improvement. What needs to happen is for the

citizens in small/rural communities to begin to acknowledge this history and allow it to make them proud of the story that is uniquely theirs. The lack of acknowledgement stems, in part, from the Puritan values influence that was dominant in early communities in the United States. The current struggle between the evangelical religious right and the arts is directly related to this history.

The problem is that citizens in rural/small communities do not always know their own community's history of arts and cultures or that of rural cultural traditions more generally. There is a long and glorious tradition of arts and culture within the rural/small community history, but it rarely found its way into traditional arts and cultural events or organizations. The movement was sparked by the Lyceum Speakers Bureau and expanded with the explosion of Literary Scientific Circles connected to the Chautauqua movement. The Chautauqua movement had even more impact when the Tent Chautauqua movement began at the beginning of the twentieth century, bringing arts and culture to people in rural communities all across the nation, beginning a rich history of nurturing the arts in rural/small communities all across the United States.³

Suggested strategies re: Increase awareness of history

- a. Rural/small communities do not need to be saved, they need to be savored and one of the ways to do this is for citizens to remind themselves of their rich heritage and long history of creative, innovative expressions. Rural/small communities do not need to be *given* culture – they have their own. What needs to be done is for the citizens of these communities to understand and honour the unique culture that is present and honour it while challenging people to move beyond what they have done into new ways of doing things. This is especially important if outside resources are brought into a rural/small community. If the citizens in a community do not know/honour their own story, it is hard for outsiders to learn the story. However, sometimes these outsiders can help a community identify something they may have forgotten.
 - b. It is important for citizens to understand the nature of creativity and how engaging in creative experiences cannot only enhance an individual's sense of self, it can also encourage that individual to become more active, more involved, and more engaged in the democracy of civil discourse. This creativity is lodged in each community's rural genius and is part of the essential natural resource that helped bring their community into existence.
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3.2.2. Tendency for rural/small community citizens to “one-down” local community arts/cultural expressions

This tendency relates to the image people who live in rural/small communities often have of themselves. Many people in rural/small community do not think of their own creative expressions and cultural traditions as *real* arts/culture, but rather as just “folk arts.” Many

³ For further information, see the essay “Porches and Parlors” in Overton (2001b).

citizens think that arts and culture are something other communities have and the only way they can enjoy them is to “import” them into their community. The sad thing about this reality is that many communities can raise substantial funds to bring in a state or regional arts group and yet cannot raise that same amount of money to support local arts, heritage, and cultural needs. Until the citizens of rural/small communities begin to recognize and honour their own “rural genius,” it is unlikely ever to change the external bias (see Section 3.2.3) that exists against the quality and value of the local community arts experience.

Suggested strategies re: Improve individual and community self-image

- a. Arts and cultural organizations need to help citizens in rural/small communities to begin to value their own self-expressions and community-based art, heritage, and culture and identify and celebrate the citizens in their history who manifested creative “rural genius.” The best way to do this is to get them to participate in and experience the arts on a personal basis. When the individuals in a community begin to have this personal experience, it changes their sense of self and their self-esteem. This can have a dramatic impact on their overall *sense of place* and *poetry of place*. As the individual self-image improves so will their community self-image.
 - b. Focusing on promoting and presenting both local, community-based arts experiences and arts, heritage, and culture from outside the community provides the right balance to nurture the rural/small community. Because local, community-based arts and culture are not always valued within the community, some citizens accept the value placed on arts and culture from outside their own community. But this can also encourage them to support local arts/cultural expressions as well as potentially become participants in these experiences themselves. The critical issue here is finding the right balance between local and outside cultural opportunities.
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3.2.3. Tendency for those outside rural/small communities to put-down local arts, heritage, and culture and impose outside cultural values

People in rural/small communities do not need culture “brought in” – they need support for and respect of the culture they already have in place. People in rural/small communities are accustomed to hearing people outside their community put them down. Because it coincides with their negative self-image, they usually do not object. And this enables this internal and external negative image – this *ruralism* – to continue.

The way this ruralism is manifested by those outside the community involves several assumptions. First, that people in rural/small communities are not capable of doing what needs to be done. Second, that when it comes to arts and culture, rural/small community people do not have any. Third, that since rural communities do not know about arts and culture and do not have any of their own of any consequence, it is clear they need to be told what is good. And, almost every time, what they are told is good is what people in the urban areas think is good. So this is what many people in rural/small communities think they should have – arts and culture from the urban areas.

This external ruralism presents itself the most when the “experts” come in from outside the community. Quite often, without intending to do so, they put down the local culture and impose their external values. There are assumptions about what people in rural/small communities really need, and often it has little to do with any interaction with the people who live in these communities. This has happened for so long in so many different ways that many rural/small communities just are not interested in anyone from the outside coming into their community, whether they are economic, community, or culture development specialists. To many of them, “another consultant, another expensive report to put on the shelf.” It is hard to break through this pattern.

One of the places this external value system imposition occurs the most is when architects come into a community to design a local cultural facility. Since there are few architects in rural/small communities that focus on large public facilities, it is not unusual for some firm from the nearest urban area to respond to an RFP and be selected. Unfortunately, it is also not unusual for some of these individuals to not know about the local community history and cultural values and not bother to ask. This often results in something being designed and built that has no connection to the local sense of place or poetry of place that are so important to the community. It is essential that we pay more attention to the local community voice in the planning process and respect what it says.

More suggested strategies re: Improve individual and community self-image

- a. Educate a diverse group of people within the community to understand what is unique and important about the community. This advocacy work is essential to promote the role arts and culture can play to help a community move forward and address difficult challenges facing it.
 - b. Do not impose external values on funding criteria. Create funding programs that are viable and applicable to the rural/small community setting. Do not expect rural/small communities to easily adjust to funding programs designed for urban organizations. The issue of rural/small communities funding is not access or excellence, it is access to excellence.
 - c. Create “training of trainers” programs for people who work in rural/small communities, both local citizens as well as those who might come in as resources from outside the community so they can learn a more effective and constructive communication style. The rural/small community context is different and requires special effort to adjust to it.
 - d. It is not that rural/small communities do not have the human capital resources needed to do this work. The challenge is that few individuals in these communities have ever done it. They need experience, training resources, and the resources to create effective planning teams.
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3.2.4. The challenge of arts and cultural vocabulary

The very use of the terms *arts* and *culture* creates challenges for some people in rural/small communities, especially those engaged in community cultural development. Many citizens think of the arts only as a product, a thing that is purchased or a performance attended by people who are “cultured.” And most do not think of creativity or arts or culture as something that has much to do with their own lives, despite the fact that the rural genius was what brought them into existence and helped them survive against all odds.

It is not so much that they will not use the words *arts* and *culture*, they just do not see the relevance of those words in their day-to-day lives. In addition, promoting the concept of a *creative economy* in a rural/small community is very difficult. Very few rural/small communities can really focus on generating a *creative economy* when they are fighting for their very survival. And, unfortunately, those that do quite often pay the indirect price of losing the very sense of place and poetry of place that make their community special in the first place.

One of the challenges facing people in rural/small communities is to not only talk about arts and culture in a way that helps people see them in a different light, but to actually view arts and culture as viable strategies to address local issues. Local leaders are increasingly looking at the arts and culture of their community in a new light. It is incumbent upon those involved in arts and culture to get themselves at the table when it comes to all discussions relating to local issues.

Suggested strategies re: Issues of vocabulary

- a. It is important to help local citizens explore what the word culture means and translate this into their own setting. To do this, it is important to help citizens see the direct and indirect benefits of cultural development and then move into community arts development. If people use the current vernacular of the field, the “practice jargon” many practitioners are accustomed to using, it may not translate effectively into the rural/small community context. Language is the most essential “first bridge” that must be built with the community – it helps people make the connection.
- b. There is a need to promote a paradigm shift from “art as product and citizen as patron” to “art as process and citizen as participant.” This is consistent with the history of arts and culture being connected to ideas of self-education and self-improvement. When citizens see arts and culture as something that is connected to their own lives, it will make it more relevant and important. People need to think about arts and culture differently and that means we need to be talking about arts and culture differently. Nothing will change until this new vocabulary is learned.
- c. The current arts and cultural development vocabulary of *creative economies* and *high-creatives* that dominate the arts, cultural, and economic development world right now are unlikely going to make it into the day-to-day talk of most rural/small communities. What is needed is to communicate the same concepts in a way that makes sense in a rural/small community setting. Instead of the arts and creativity, people should be talking about innovation and citizen entrepreneurship; instead of

`cultural facilities, citizens should be talking about their community gathering places; instead of focusing on developing creative economies, local leaders need to be talking about shifting the economic development focus away from an extraction economy toward a more constructive, sustainable, expression economy.

3.3. From extraction to expression economy: Translation of creative economy and cultural infrastructure strategies into the rural/small community context

Five key elements distinguish cultural development work in small/rural communities: a longer timeline for projects; the need for a through community cultural assessment process to help ensure authentic, sustainable processes; volunteer or part-time staff will likely supply the local leadership and other human resources for the project; the need to keep cultural tourism in balance with the overall needs of the community and its sense of self; and the lack of granting or funding authority at the local level.

3.3.1. Project timeline – longer is usually better than shorter

The project timeline is one of the challenges to doing effective community cultural development work in rural/small communities. Whether it is done by local political and cultural leaders or by someone from outside the community, there is a lot of preliminary work to be done before the work can be accomplished. This is not a play on words. It is one of the most important lessons I have learned in doing cultural development work in rural/small communities all over the U.S., both working as a local community arts administrator and as an outside resource going into communities to help local citizens and organizations do the work themselves.

It is unusual for cultural development in rural/small communities to be accomplished in a short interval. This kind of work takes time. First, the citizens need to know what it is they want to accomplish. Many times, this requires a major paradigm shift for many people within the community and the time to accomplish this shift is essential to any possibility of success for these kinds of projects. Second, they have to identify the resources that are needed to accomplish the work. Third, they have to work through the process of acquiring these resources, often facing tough challenges and decisions for where local resources should be used. Sometimes it means actually challenging the traditional use of local resources by inviting new and innovative thinking about how arts and culture can be considered an essential resource for the community itself. The necessary time to challenge preconceived notions and introduce new ideas must be invested to ensure success.

Effective community cultural development planning resources and training are also needed. As individuals within the community choose to participate in this work, it is essential they receive the training needed to do it effectively, especially how to plan it effectively and bring it all together. Knowing a community and knowing how a community works best together are key ingredients for success.

Suggested strategies re: Project timelines

- a. We need to train community cultural developers, those inside as well as outside the community. Create “training of trainers” programs and professional development opportunities for citizens doing cultural development work in rural/small communities (internal and external). This should include university extension programs as well as state, regional, and national funding agencies. The university extension programs begun at the beginning of the last century are excellent models to use. State arts agency resources also provide invaluable assistance to local arts and cultural organization leaders. Since most of these organizations function without any paid staff or part-time paid staff, developing the capacity of boards of directors to oversee the necessary assessment, planning, and program/project implementation is critical.
 - b. Consider using community colleges and technical colleges as potential resource agencies for cultural development work in rural/small communities. This is an untapped resource and should be considered one of the most valuable resources local communities have to use. Many of them exist in rural/small communities and this would help them make a stronger connection with the community.
 - c. Create new local leader development opportunities that go beyond the traditional programs designed to introduce young new business people to their community. Effective leader-development can help citizens work together and develop shared values/visions/ missions for their organizations and their communities. This can contribute significantly to the sustainability and self-determination of a community. It can also help promote a new understanding of how important arts and culture can be to the overall development of a community.
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3.3.2. Need for thorough community cultural assessment

You cannot “cookie-cutter” an assessment or community cultural development project in rural/small communities. Authentic, sustainable cultural development can only occur when a large percentage of the citizens in a community are engaged in the process. The advantage of working in a rural/small community context is the prospect of obtaining a large buy-in of the citizens because the population figures are considerably lower. If the citizens in a rural/small community make the decision to do something, they generally will accomplish that goal. The challenge is to make sure the goals that are adopted represent the full community, not a small percentage of it.

Community cultural assessments also provide an excellent way for arts and cultural organizations to make inroads into social and political networks that have not historically been open to them. It is also an excellent way to help people begin to develop a vocabulary that is inclusive of arts and culture in a way that has not been accomplished before.

It is important to establish a cooperative team of citizens consisting of a diverse representation of the community. It is also important to create public/private partnerships. The role of arts, heritage, and cultural organizations is frequently not understood by either the

community or, even more unfortunately, by the organizations themselves. Many of the non-profit organizations in rural/small communities are fragile structures, with narrowly focused purposes, run by a very small group of people, many of whom are aging. Many of these organizations have not been successful in getting to “the table.” An effective assessment process will assist in achieving this goal. It can get local community leaders a new way of looking at the arts and culture of their community. It also gives these arts and cultural organizations a standing in the community they have not experienced before. This helps them take their rightful place at the table as the community creates a vision for the future.

Suggested strategies re: Effective assessment and project planning

- a. Establish clear and effective public/private partnerships in the cultural assessment/cultural development work. Get local public officials, educators, and professionals involved, and go beyond traditional arts and culture supporters. These individuals can become new, vital advocates. In some instances, finding a local community political leader and helping them understand the true contribution arts and culture make to the community can provide them with a real cause that can propel them into stronger leadership positions, and benefit arts and cultural organizations.
 - b. Create a broad coalition of people who are willing to work toward the common goal of promoting the community. Invite a wide mix of organizations including arts and cultural groups, the YMCA, school districts, youth, seniors, health organizations, civic leaders and staff, and so forth to participate. The more public/private partnerships established through the community cultural planning process, the more likelihood the final plan will be implemented.
 - c. Sometimes, to accomplish the above, it means placing the role of arts and culture secondary to the goals of overall community development. For too long, arts and cultural organizations have waited for everyone to understand how central they are to the community. The arts have to focus on the entire community and sometimes this means developing new strategies to tell the community what it is they have to give rather than what it is they need. This does not mean to sacrifice the arts and culture, but rather to focus on the common goals of a community and then show the community how the arts and culture can contribute toward achieving that goal.
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3.3.3. Recognize most local leadership will come from volunteers and/or part-time/paid and non-paid staff

One of the greatest challenges facing rural/small communities committed to doing effective community cultural development is the fact that often they are working with organizations that do not have paid staff or only part-time paid/non-paid staff. This places an additional burden on the project facilitator to make sure that he/she translates the activities of the project (both the assessment and the cultural planning) in such a manner that it is understood by all participants. This can be an excellent opportunity to promote the role of even part-time paid staff in the organization and sometimes these community-based cultural planning projects can be the catalyst for this to happen.

Suggested strategies re: Volunteer leadership / resources

- a. Find a cultural planning partner who can provide some of the logistical services (office space, computer services, copy machine, etc.) to keep expenses down.
 - b. Cultural planning work is a good way to help organizations take the step to hire paid staff (full-time or part-time). Sometimes, serving as the lead agency for this kind of project can produce funding to make this happen. The challenge is to keep it in place when the project is completed.
 - c. Helping these organizations find the financial resources to hire paid staff can move them to the next plateau. This can be one of the positive indirect benefits of the planning process and will help accomplish the objective above.
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3.3.4. Keep cultural tourism in balance with the overall needs of the community and its *sense of place* and *poetry of place*

While there is a clear and documented relationship between arts, heritage, culture, and economic development, it is difficult to have rural/small communities exist only on the creative economy or on cultural tourism. There usually are not enough organizations or artists to make this work in most rural/small communities. If there is enough cultural tourism to make a difference, the community itself can begin to change, losing part of the charm that made the community interesting and unique in the first place.

Suggested strategies re: Maintaining community/project balance

- a. Cultural tourism and its economic development impact (both direct and indirect) must be kept in balance with a community preserving the best of what it is while promoting the best of what it can become. Bigger is not always better. But beginning the move from extraction to expression economy by promoting the role of arts, heritage, and culture to bring people to the community is an excellent way to make this important transition. It is all a matter of balance. Begin slowly and develop ownership. People in rural/small communities need evidence that something works. Once they see it works, they will take on more.
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3.3.5. Lack of granting/funding authority at the local level

Rural/small communities frequently find themselves competing for a very small amount of public money against a lot of very large communities and organizations presenting very expansive and sophisticated programming. To compound the problem, people making granting decisions often function from a narrowed perspective and bias against the value of the arts, heritage, and culture of rural/small communities (as discussed above). As well, grant

minimums dollar-for-dollar matches are often too high and the requirement for dollar-for-dollar match is too great. Another challenge is that it is rare for local government in rural/small communities to fully comprehend the value of arts and culture. There is a great need for effective advocacy promoting arts and culture as economic development strategies in rural/small communities.

There have been many federal, regional, and state initiatives to support rural/small community cultural development since the creation of the National Endowment for the Arts. Unfortunately, much of the time, the planning for as well as the oversight and implementation of these programs has been done by people outside the community itself. Often, they are implemented by outside regional or state cultural development specialists. In other words, many of these funding programs were created *for* rural/small communities. A more effective way to accomplish these goals would be to more actively include the people from the organizations and citizens who will benefit from this funding. While an organization might not be totally ready to assume the role of lead agency for a major community cultural planning project, this can be an excellent opportunity to move it to the next stage.

One additional note: One of the requirements of outside funding agencies is effective final reporting. The purpose of the final reports is usually two-fold: first, to ensure proper compliance with grant requirements and, second, to create a “story” that can be told to promote future and increased funding support. Quite often, people who work at funding agencies express their frustration at how ineffective the rural/small community final reports seem to be. The problem with this is not the final reporting, it is the expectations. Rural/small communities should not be expected to make the case for funding through their final reporting process. The grants were given for programming, not for advocacy. If these agencies want effective advocacy from the grants they give then they need to make sure those who receive these grants receive adequate training in grant reporting. Grant final report writing is just as important as grant writing.

Suggested strategies re: Limited local funding authority

- a. Rural/small communities need to maximize their ability to fund their own programming. Reinventing local community foundations is one strategy that can be employed to accomplish this goal. There is a current movement within the community foundation field to rethink and reframe community foundations from *depositories* to being *cultural catalysts*. It is an exciting time to be involved in these organizations, and they provide the very best opportunity for a community to create an ability to be autonomous and not dependent on outside funding.
- b. The argument must be made – again and again – how much arts, heritage, and culture make both direct and indirect economic development impacts in the community. One way to do this is to make sure the cultural assessment/planning process engages the community leaders who oversee economic development. Creating effective public/private partnerships with these agencies/institutions is an excellent way of promoting the arts, heritage, and culture while generating more local ownership.
- c. One of the major issues addressing arts and culture in rural/small communities is a failure to effectively communicate why the arts are important. A strong case must be

made case for supporting arts and culture in rural/small communities programming that views the citizens as audience, and the value of participating in and experiencing the arts on a personal basis.

4. Conclusion

Doing community cultural development work in rural/small communities is not for everyone. It is not better or worse than doing this work in large urban settings, it is different and it requires a different set of skills. Individuals who do this work in this setting must have a genuine, authentic love for place and for people. They must also have the capacity to be a good teacher, a good listener, a good entrepreneurial developer and, most important of all, a strong sense of self. Along with this strong sense of self, these individuals also must have a strong *sense of place* and *poetry of place* for the community in which they are working. As stated earlier in the paper, doing community cultural development in rural/small communities is relational. This is true whether you are a local paid/non-paid staff person working with an arts or cultural organization or someone coming into the community from the outside. It always has been this way. It always will be this way.

Many people working in arts and cultural organizations in rural/small communities are basically interested in doing the art work, not necessary the work of promoting the art. In other words, if they are an artist or part of a creative expression discipline, they want to do the art itself. If they are in history or heritage, they want to help protect, preserve, and promote the particular aspect of the community story to which they are focused and connected. For much of the last century and beginning of this new century, arts in the rural/small community setting have faced enormous challenges. Lack of funding and low participation (including attendance) have been real issues. But they have not been the greatest challenge. The greatest challenge is the fact that many people in rural/small communities do not fully realize the importance of arts and culture and how essential they are to the overall economic, community, and cultural development of the place where they live.

People in rural/small communities are creative, they just do not think of themselves that way. There is something to do and they find the best, most efficient way to do it. Some of them do art, they just do not think of it as art but rather as an expression of their history or cultural tradition. They have culture, but they do not realize it is something special. And they celebrate self-expression but they do not set it outside the context of day-to-day life – it is viewed as something that is necessary, not something special only a few people have. Most important of all, they are fiercely committed to the concept of self-determination. It is their community and they do not take the concept of citizenship lightly. They want ownership. They want respect. They want sustainability for their community. And they will insist on ownership. If this does not happen, they will lose interest in a hurry and the plan, whatever it might be and however wonderful it might make the community, will simply join all the other “plans” collecting dust on the shelf on the shelf.

Over the past 50 years in the United States, rural/small communities have undergone enormous change. They have been under siege from those outside the community and, sometimes, even from those within it. Some are barely surviving, having lost the major industry or economic engine they have relied on since being established as centers of commerce. Some of these communities have surrendered to the stress of change and transition facing them and lost their identity and their sense of place. But some are picking up the challenge to create new strategies to protect their community from the forces that threaten its ability to survive.

Over the course of the first decade of this century, many rural/small communities across the United States have made it clear that they are not only alive and well, but also that they are determined to surmount any challenge in front of them and ensure the future of their community. For these citizens, be they third or fourth generation citizens or brand new to the community, there is a growing commitment to community-based self-determination. These citizens simply are not interested in someone telling them how to do something – they want to do it themselves. They are open to help and willing to create partnerships, but they function with the knowledge and increasing self-confidence that they know their community the best and, because of this, they are the best resources available for their community to overcome challenges and succeed.

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In the past few months, we have seen our entire culture hit a cultural “reset button.” It was not by choice but rather as a result of a catastrophic economic setback. Almost every citizen in this nation realizes something is different – the easy way is gone. The days of an increasing sense of entitlement and decreasing lack of responsibility to make it happen suddenly, unexpectedly, seems to be over. The lifestyle based on “getting” is now shifting to a way of life of “giving.” This has the markings of the emergence of a fundamental shift of values. If this is true, arts and cultural organizations in rural/small communities may just find themselves very relevant. And this is a very exciting development.

Rural/small communities in the United States are not new to these challenges – they have always thrived against difficult odds, no matter how great they appeared to be. The somewhat contradictory values of rugged individualism and intense community spirit continue to join together to provide the energy, the shared vision, and the essential self-determination to overcome obstacles that many thought were impossible. There is a special satisfaction to be achieved by citizens in rural/small communities who successfully engage in the democracy of civil discourse by using the arts and creativity as a way to discover their own voice, celebrate their own stories, and determine their own future.

Economic and community development are important tools for rural/small communities to achieve sustainability through self-determination. But even more important than this, arts and culture in these communities are becoming increasingly recognized as valuable resources in this process. This happens as individuals and organizations involved in the arts and culture in their community begin to more fully recognize their role in promoting civic engagement, citizen entrepreneurship, and community creativity. When they are successful in doing this, they create new and exciting opportunities for citizens to become involved in their community and promote self-determination. This invites citizens to engage in the democracy of civil discourse and, as they do, more fully realize just how essential the arts and culture of their

community are to their community's future. When this happens, arts and culture will continue to take their rightful place as essential economic, community, and cultural development resources for rural/small communities in the United States.

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Annex A.

Community Profiles – United States

These projects are but a few that testify to the tenacity, persistence, and creativity of rural/small communities to use the arts and creativity to engage in community sustainability and self-determination and are only a sampling of what is happening in rural/small communities across the United States. For additional resources, see the annotated bibliography that includes numerous state and regional sites that provide links to many more case studies.

Contents

The Wildwood Barn Rural Mural Project

Amery, Wisconsin Northern Lakes Center for the Arts

The New Richmond Area Community Front Porch Project

The SPACE: A Centre for Creativity in New Richmond, Wisconsin

The Academy Square Project in Brigham City, Utah

The Montana Arts Council: Building arts participation in rural America

The Duvall, Washington, cultural/economic development planning projects

The State of Wyoming Creative Economies Initiative

The Wildwood Barn Rural Mural Project

The Wildwood Barn Rural Mural Project symbolizes the best of what can happen at the rural/small community level when different organizations and a diverse group of citizens join together to create and implement a shared vision for their community. The Menominee County Barns Project provided a continuing thread to help young people learn about their family and community history, resulting in a public mural of images that arose from the student research portraying Menominee County life – past and present – wildlife and wild rice, Menominee County as the dairy capital of the Upper Peninsula, the light house, Native Americans, forests, fields, and original immigrants.

The project was instituted by the Menominee County Fair in an attempt to help young people discover the story of their community and create a personal connection to the place in which they live. The intent was to address the long-term impact of the out-migration of youth, contributing to young people creating a strong connection to the community in which they live, thus encouraging them to want to stay in their community.

The implementation stages of the Project were overseen Dawn Wozniak, area 4-H leader and Battle Creek artist Renick Stevenson. The Project also enlisted area educators, historians, the local arts council, the historical society, the Intermediate School District, Extension, 4-H members, and many local sponsors. All worked together with the youth to explore their community's history and find ways to visually tell their story. The youth interviewed family members and community elders about their lives and the ways in which the barns in the County were such an important part of them. Art students then explored how this history could be visually presented, developing their own designs from which elements of the final mural were drawn and painted. Fourteen young artists (ages 10-18) and 57 community volunteers (age 3 to grandma) worked together to paint 22 separate panels that were then installed on the barn.

The project received unexpected attention in 2002 when a photograph of the mural was selected as the cover and highlighted as one of the case studies in the book *Rooted in Place: Cultivating Community Culture*. The book was published by the Michigan State University Museum in partnership with the Copper Country Community Arts Council and the Rural Arts & Culture Program of the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs. The publication of this book featuring the Wildwood barn on the cover has helped make the project an icon in Michigan community cultural development. For anyone interested in more case studies in Michigan, *Rooted in Place* is an excellent resource for anyone interested in how arts, heritage, and culture join together in rural/small communities to invite citizens to learn and celebrate their story, and, at the same time, work together creatively to express who they are as individuals and as a community. For more information on this Project, contact Julie Avery at averyj@msu.edu or http://ruralarts.museum.msu.edu/resources/rooted_in_place/

Amery, Wisconsin Northern Lakes Center for the Arts

Amery is a community of 2,850 people nestled among the rolling hills and lakes of northern west-central Wisconsin. The countryside is mostly beautiful farmland and relatively clean water recreation areas. The seasonal landscapes are spectacular. Most important of all, Amery is considered to be in the fifth ring of urban expansion from the Minneapolis/St. Paul metro

area, which means it is just beyond the edge of urban sprawl – for now. The community’s economic base centers around farming and related agri-business with tourism in an ever expanding and growing second place. Socio-economically, the city is mostly middle-class, with neither extreme poverty nor extreme wealth with a high percentage of older adult citizens who have chosen to retire there.

The Northern Lakes Center for the Arts was created in 1989 to serve as a home for an area chamber orchestra, writing group, community theatre group, and visual artists group. It was established in a renovated Lutheran Church (purchased by the founders and leased to the organization) as a comprehensive cultural center designed to provide local residents with the opportunity to develop and share their creative talents and ability with one another and with the general public.

The values of the Center include: The arts represent our society’s highest form of cultural and spiritual expression; The authentic experience of the arts involves active participation, not passive observation from a distance; Art is first of all a process rather than a product: “Art is Action”; Everyone possesses inherent creativity and imagination which can be further developed; and finally, Involvement in the arts not only enriches the lives of individuals, it ennobles and raises the spirit of the entire community as well. This is highly evolved, clearly defined statement guiding the Center’s work in the community.

To add to these core values, the Center’s far-reaching vision states: “At some point in their lives, everyone in the community of Amery will become actively involved in some creative arts activity.” No arts agency in any size community in the United States has a values/vision statement any more far-reaching than the one from this small community of less than 3,000. The Center’s programming includes visual arts exhibits featuring local and visiting artists; music concerts involving performances of the Northern Lakes Chamber Orchestra and visiting, guest musicians; Community Theatre Performances involving the Northern Lakes Theater Guild; and Writing and Literary Activities, publishing stories, poems, and essays written by members of the Northern Lakes Writer’s Guild. This is but a small list of the many resources the Center provides the community.

In 1996, the Center received the Governor’s Award in Support of the Arts, the state’s highest public award for achievement in the arts. Not long after this, the work of the Center resulted in Amery being listed in the first *The 100 Best Small Arts Towns in America*. Recognizing the need to branch out and seek new economic strategies to support the Center and the citizen artists who enjoyed its resources, the Center began serving as publisher of the local area newspaper, *The Hometown Gazette*. The Writer’s Guild writes the articles, visual artists provide artwork, the Photography Group provide the photographs, and the end result is an innovative fundraising mechanism that is consistent with the purpose, values, and vision of the Center. All of these programs have helped make the Northern Lakes Center for the Arts has become a central gathering place for the community, showing how vital arts, heritage, and culture can be for a rural/small community. More information on the Center is available at www.northernlakescenter.org or by contacting LaMoine MacLaughlin, Executive Director at lammacl@amerytel.net.

The New Richmond Area Community Front Porch Project

The New Richmond area community exists within St. Croix County on the eastern border between Minnesota and Wisconsin, the fastest growing county in Wisconsin. The area community population comparison between the 1990 census and the estimated 2008 population shows a 66% increase in population. This magnitude of change at such an accelerated rate in such a short time has taken a toll on the community. Areas of agricultural land are being replaced by housing developments to accommodate this increased population. The result is that many people living here no longer recognize the small town “sense of place” of the community and this started to generate community conflict. The New Richmond Area Community Front Porch Project was started just under 3 years ago to address a growing lack of civility in the community. A community cultural assessment process was undertaken, followed by an in-depth cultural planning project. The preliminary draft of the area community Cultural Plan was completed in 2008.

One of the major outcomes of this cultural planning process was the development of the New Richmond Area Community Government Entities Network. This group, consisting of elected representatives from the City, four townships and Village, have agreed to meet once a month and work together to address issues that have been divisive in the past. The group is currently focused on making a recommendation to the Board of Education regarding what happens to the Middle School Building when it is vacated in 2011. This building will become a major cultural facility, providing a new, mixed-use gathering place for the entire area. Potential public/private partners include a new community library, central offices and teaching space for the Community Education Program, Older Adult Programming, Sports Association, Ambulance District, Community Foundation, and other community service programs. This is the first intergovernmental planning project in the New Richmond area community’s history.

Another outcome of the cultural assessment was the recognition that the deferred philanthropic giving over the past 20 years was catching up to the community. Community leaders recognized the need to increase community capital (financial, human, and social) in order to address deferred giving as well as the growing cultural development needs of the community. Directors of the New Richmond Area Community Foundation, established in 1980, had been involved in the Front Porch Project from its inception. One year ago, the Foundation underwent a major organizational transition, expanding its vision to include being a cultural catalyst. As a result of this decision, the Foundation agreed to step forward to serve as the lead agency for the Front Porch Project.

This shift of focus was enhanced in January with the Foundation securing a \$150,000 three-year grant from the Bremer Foundation for support of the Front Porch Project. This grant will support the continuation and expansion of the Government Entities Network as well as the design and implementation of a year-long Citizen Leader-Development Program entitled Leadership Trust Initiative. The grant project is entitled “The New Richmond Area Community Front Porch Project: Engaging the Democracy of Civil Discourse.” It focuses on translating creativity, citizen entrepreneurship, and cultural development into strategies that address community sustainability and self-determination. For more information contact Michele Hermansen, Executive Director of the New Richmond Area Community Foundation michele2525@gmail.com or Patrick Overton, Front Porch Project Director poverton@clatsopcc.edu.

The SPACE: A centre for creativity in New Richmond, Wisconsin

The SPACE opened in 2006 in New Richmond, Wisconsin, when a single citizen became concerned about how few opportunities there were to promote creativity. Owner and CEO of one of the largest local community industries, Domain, Inc., Bill Buell decided that the future of his community was directly connected to its citizens discovering their own creativity. He believed the best way to do this was to provide them with an opportunity to participate in and experience the arts on a personal basis so he decided to take a portion of the corporate office space that was empty at the time and convert it into a place that nurtured human creativity, calling it *The SPACE, A Centre for Creativity*, the purpose of which is to invite the community to celebrate and participate in creativity.

Buell chose to form The SPACE as a Limited Liability Corporation, but he based it on the Vermont model for “low-profit.” While the “low-profit” model does not exist in Wisconsin yet, the concept is being explored as a viable alternative to the traditional nonprofit structure and the Centre will be prepared when this model is adopted. This emerging model is supported by the National Council on Foundations as a way to encourage entrepreneurial ventures through supporting individual risk-taking by providing grants and tax benefit support to help the ventures. The criterion for receiving public or private support is the commitment of “low-profit” organizations to provide the same kind of public service as do other nonprofit organizations. Buell strongly believes promoting citizen and community creativity is a much-needed/often over-looked public service.

Investing personal capital in the project, Buell had plans drawn up to convert the small, challenging space into a place promoting visual and performing arts. A small proscenium theatre provides a venue for small cast plays. The remainder of the building was designed so it could be used as visual arts exhibit space. He then added tables/chairs for people to sit in an informal setting, opened up a small kitchen with food and refreshments for sale before and after performances, and launched his new venture. Programming includes performances and classes, visual arts exhibits featuring the work of local and regional artists of all disciplines, musical performances featuring local and regional musicians, literature including readings featuring new work, and opportunities for live theatre including local productions as well as regional touring companies. The SPACE provides a much-needed place where citizens can gather together and celebrate who they are individually as a community.

It is now in its third year. When asked how he defined the success of his entrepreneurial commitment to creativity, Buell replied, “We know we are successful as long as people keep coming through the door and people have been coming through the door and sharing The SPACE. When they do, they know they are in a place dedicated to creativity and to the core value that every human being has the capacity to be creative.”

This effort by Bill Buell shows what happens when one individual invites other individuals in a community to take risks, express themselves and discover their own creativity. The community has said yes to his invitation and in the process, they have made The SPACE a special gathering place for the Community. It is no coincidence that The SPACE opened almost simultaneously with the formation of the New Richmond Area Front Porch Project (presented as a case study above). Buell was a prime mover in promoting the Project which he believes is another way to encourage citizens to become engaged in working together to advance community creativity and, in turn, self-determination. For more information, contact wbuell@domaininc.com.

The Academy Square Project in Brigham City, Utah

Brigham City, Utah, is a community of approximately 17,000 people situated in the very northwest corner of Utah. It is the most northern point of the Utah Wasatch Front, identified as one of the fastest growing areas in the United States. While the population of Brigham City has stayed relatively stable, the portion of the Wasatch Front from Provo to Brigham City has exploded. During the 2000 census, one county north of Salt Lake City showed a 26% population increase in just ten years. This increase has steadily continued during the past eight years. In fact, as the nation's housing industry has slowed down significantly the past two years, the communities on the Wasatch Front have maintained a steady, 13% increase in home values and an 8% increase in housing starts. While the Wasatch Front has undergone a dramatic population increase, Brigham City has not.

The Brigham City Council and staff, in particular, Paul Larsen, the City's Director of Economic Development, have clearly understood what is coming their way and have spent the last five years attempting to position the community for controlled growth and development. In this sense, Brigham City is at the opposite end of the growth spectrum from New Richmond area community discussed above. The Academy Square Project is a restoration, renovation, and new construction of a historic building and will eventually expand to include the Academy Square Plaza. The estimated cost for this project is between \$9-10 million (including establishing an endowment of \$2 million), helping Academy Square become the community's new "Front Porch Gathering Place."

One of the significant developments coming out of this restoration project was the discovery of the role that three early Twentieth Century Brigham City residents had not only on the development of modern ballet, but the entire American culture. The Christensen Brothers, sons of the person who built the Academy building, became famous ballet dancers. Among other accomplishments, they were responsible for forming the San Francisco Ballet, the first modern ballet company in the United States. William Christensen choreographed the first American production of the *Nutcracker Ballet* in 1944, helping it become one of the most viewed arts performances in the world and, without question, a new Christmas tradition. Hardly anyone in Brigham City knew about this connection to the Christensen Brothers, modern ballet, and the first American production of the *Nutcracker Ballet*, and has resulted in an increased sense of community pride.

In 2007, the Brigham City was one of eight statewide recipients for a newly instituted Creative Community Initiative Grant from the Utah Arts Council. This grant supported the creation of a cultural plan that included a three-block wide, two-block deep Downtown Cultural District, to revitalize the downtown area businesses as well as a connection between the new Academy Square, and the historic downtown area. The Brigham City Council approved the plan in 2008.

Work was begun on the Box Elder Dance and Music Hall in December 2008, funded by a \$1 million grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development. This, combined with the \$1.3 million already invested in the Project by the City through its Rural Development Funds, leaves just over \$7 million left to be raised. The Academy Square Foundation was brought into existence in 2007 and is currently organizing its fundraising efforts to fund the remaining phases of the Project. For more information, contact Paul Larsen at plarsen@brighamcity.utah.gov.

The Montana Arts Council: Building arts participation in rural America

The Montana Arts Council (MAC) was established in 1967 to develop the creative potential of all Montanans, advance education, spur economic vibrancy, and revitalize communities through involvement in the arts. Fifty percent of the state's population lives in communities under 20,000 with many of its 56 counties considered "frontier," meaning they are less populated than "rural," with fewer than six people per square mile.

In 2002, the State Arts Council received a grant from the Wallace Foundation to create and implement a Montana Rural Arts Participation-Building Initiative. The Council's strategy was to complete an in-depth survey to determine Montanan's participation (called the Montana Study); provide grants to seven organizations through a three-year program to develop and test strategies for building participation; and then analyze the work done by these organizations to develop national and international models for participation.

The Council selected seven communities across the state, some in metropolitan centers but most from rural communities. The outcome of this Wallace Grant and the work done by these seven communities is presented in a publication by the Montana Arts Council called *Building Arts Participation in Rural America: Success Stories*, written by Louise K. Stevens of ARTSMARKET. The publication identifies the essential elements of success for the arts in rural/small communities, including:

- Structure any project to build collaboration, partnership and a higher level of communication
- Understand the culture of the community that is targeted, and respond accordingly
- Combine relevant programming with the right place
- Recognize the essential role of volunteers and don't overwhelm them
- Reach geographically, but not too far (use hubs and spokes)
- Recognize the realities of staff and volunteer turnover, and make sure more than one person is carrying the torch
- Evaluate progress and make changes as needed
- Absorb a participation-building culture and live it, and
- Create something sustainable.

In January 2005, the Montana Arts Council published *Montana, The Land of Creativity*, presenting a short introduction to 30 Montanan community-based arts programs and how the arts spur the economy of the state and produce economic impact through hard working partners and community trailblazers. This publication spotlights the entrepreneurial spirit, rural/small communities that are made better through the arts, the benefits the public gains from creative minds and the lasting legacy the arts and creativity provide to the citizens of Montana. This is a companion piece to the arts participation-building publication presented above.

The final publication related to the Wallace Foundation grant to the Montana Arts Council to build rural arts participation is *The Arts Mean Business: Fund Raising Ideas that Work in Rural America*. Published in 2006 as part of the Wallace Foundation's initiatives in Montana,

this book is a compilation of "best practices" of rural/small community arts organizations all across the United States. These three publications are excellent resources for anyone doing community cultural development in rural/small communities. They provide successful case studies – as well as some projects that did not work as planned – all of which are valuable models for individuals and organizations doing community cultural development work in rural/small communities. For information on these publications as well as contact information for the Montana organizations involved in the Wallace Foundation Projects, contact Cinda Holt, Montana Arts Council Business Development Specialist, at cholt@montana.com.

The Duvall, Washington, cultural/economic development planning projects

What started out as an informal organizational development project for the Duvall Arts Commission ended up becoming a major community cultural assessment and planning project for this small community of less than 8,000 just 45 minutes from downtown Seattle. The community had experienced so much growth it had to place a moratorium on new housing due to limitations of the sanitation system between 2000 and approximately 2005. Community comprehensive planning documents projected a doubling of the population in this small community within 5 to 10 years once this moratorium was lifted.

The Arts Commission hired an outside facilitator to assist them in conducting a cultural information sweep designed to produce a community cultural assessment report. The Commission members spent several months involved in an extensive list of individual interviews with citizens, government officials, and City staff. Following this, the community was invited to attend several Community Conversations to explore the various issues facing the community, in particular, how arts/heritage/culture played a vital role in the future of Duvall. Following the City Council's adoption of the cultural assessment recommendations, the Arts Commission began work on comprehensive cultural planning process. The cultural plan identified a South Cultural Anchor (the historic Thayer barn restored/renovated into a small arts center); a North Cultural Anchor (the Duvall Heritage Park featuring historic farm implements and equipment on display at the Dougherty Farmstead including demonstrations); and a Central Cultural Anchor (the old town center turned into a cultural district and outdoor gathering place).

This is a story of cooperation, collaboration, and sometimes, community conflict. The Cultural Plan was never adopted by the City Council, verifying what can happen when the planning goals of paid City staff ends up in competition or disagreement with the outcomes wanted by active, engaged citizens. Ironically, not long after the Duvall Cultural Plan was completed, the City commissioned a Seattle consulting firm to complete a 2006-2011 Economic Development plan for Duvall. After interviews with the Cultural Planning Team and reviewing the Cultural Planning document, the firm included many of the recommendations of the Cultural Plan as major components of the economic development plan, verifying the impact engaged citizens can have when they work together toward community sustainability and self-determination.

Within the past year there has been a resurgence of interest in the establishment of a South Cultural Anchor with the City Council voting to support the creation of a Heritage Park. The property has been identified, the planning for the Project is now underway, and citizens once again feel the Cultural Plan is back on track. Through everything that has happened in

this community the past five years, this new development shows how persistent citizen engagement in and local ownership of a community-based planning process can have a positive impact on the community's cultural and economic development. It also shows what can happen when City staff, elected representatives, and citizens persist through disagreements and unaligned vision to work together to accomplish shared goals on behalf of the citizens of the community.

While there were some failures associated with this project, there are many lessons to be learned about the importance of establishing and maintaining shared values, vision, and mission of a community to guide both the citizens and the paid City staff that serve them. For more information on The Duvall Project, contact Ray and Tove Burhen, founders and Co-Chairs of the Duvall Heritage Park Project at toveb@nwlink.com.

The State of Wyoming Creative Economies Initiative

The State of Wyoming has the smallest population of any state in the United States (5.2 people per square mile). With only two communities having populations over 50,000, the vast percentage of the state consists of rural/small communities with very small populations.

In 2006, the State of Wyoming and its Cultural Affairs Division adopted a strategic plan that, among other initiatives, focuses on promoting arts, heritage, and culture as catalysts for community and economic development across the State. Connecting several divisions within the government, this innovative effort has taken a major step toward translating the creative economy movement into the rural/small community context. To support this strategic planning goal, the Wyoming Arts Council established the Community Arts Partners Grant Program in 2008 to support "innovative community collaborations anchored by the arts." This one-year grant promotes economic and cultural development through the arts, heritage, and culture in Wyoming communities, providing up to \$10,000 per applicant.

The Wyoming Arts Council is now in its second year of this program, providing funding support to five communities in 2008 and four in 2009. One of the first communities funded, Sheridan, provides an excellent case study for how a rural/small community (population 16,000) can continue to reinvent itself using an innovative public/private partnership to promote the arts, citizen entrepreneurship, and economic development.

Joe Hesch, director of the College's new Entrepreneurship Program, created a community-wide advisory group to assist the College in working with the community to address shared issues. The purpose of this program is to forge stronger ties between the College and the community of Sheridan as well as providing the students of the College with unique opportunities to study and apply the principles of entrepreneurship directly into a local community setting.

In 2008, the Wyoming Arts Council provided a special Community Arts Partners Grant to Sheridan Community College to create a public/private partnership with the Sheridan Arts Guild and the Sheridan Downtown Business Association. The purpose of the grant was to explore ways to support local artists in their efforts to do their art and make a living at the same time. The College created a series of workshops called "The Business of Art," designed to help local artists learn better how to maximize the capacity of e-commerce to market and

sell their work. This project also explored strategies to incorporate the use of empty downtown space to provide artists workspace, and main street galleries to help sell the work of the individual artists. These efforts contributed to cultural tourism, helping the arts in Sheridan become identified as major contributors to the economic strength and vitality of the community.

With the help of the resources of the local community college, Sheridan is taken steps to create resources to meet the economic and cultural development needs of the community. What the support of the Community Arts Partners Grant from the Wyoming Arts Council did was to provide the catalyst for various components of the community to work together toward a common goal – the overall economic and cultural development of their community.

For more information on the Sheridan and other Wyoming Community Arts Partners projects, contact Randy Oestman at the Wyoming Arts Council at ROestm@state.wy.us or, for information on the Sheridan College Project, contact Joe Hesch, Derector of Sheridan Community College Entrepreneurship Program at jhesch@sheridan.edu.

Patrick Overton, PhD

Patrick Overton is the Director of the Front Porch Institute, located in Astoria, Oregon. The Institute was created in 1996 and provides new and innovative professional and organizational development resources to support community cultural development and community cultural developers who work in rural/small communities.

He is the author of *Rebuilding the Front Porch of America: Essays on the Art of Community Making* and served as Editor for *Grassroots & Mountain Wings: The Arts in Rural and Small Communities*. He has published numerous articles and papers and was given the Governor's Missouri Arts Award in 1999 for his work in Missouri promoting the arts in rural and small communities. He has been a local, community-based practitioner of community cultural development in rural/small communities for the past thirty years.

His most recent speaking engagements include the Canadian 2008 Creative Construct International Symposium in Ottawa, where he made a presentation on two of his current community cultural development projects. The presentation was entitled "Engaging the Democracy of Civil Discourse." He is currently working on his new book, entitled *The Poetry of Place*. He can be contacted at poverton@clatsopcc.edu.

Developing and Revitalizing Rural Communities Through Arts and Creativity:

EUROPE

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Prepared for the Creative City Network of Canada, March 2009



Cover photo: **Cultures From Around the Block project, Multicultural Centre Prague**

The project supports the exchange of information about intercultural neighbourhoods and the experience of grassroots organizations, using as examples seven intercultural neighbourhoods from Belgium, Czech Republic, Germany, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and the United Kingdom. The project aims to bring together young people from different ethnic groups living in the same city. Through workshops, they document their surroundings via various mediums.

Photo by Simon Chang, taken on one of the field trips with youth from the participating school in Prague-Zizkov. See *Case Studies*.

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The project was conducted by the Centre for Policy Studies on Culture and Communities at Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, BC.

The project papers are available on the Creative City Network of Canada website: www.creativecity.ca

Abstract

Culture and art are an integral part of local development. From a social perspective, they are an essential component in the quality of life, as the more choices people have to participate in cultural and artistic events, the higher they rate their personal satisfaction. From an economic perspective, the development of the cultural sector in a rural area contributes to creating more jobs. It also has an impact on increasing revenues as a result of selling goods and services, or enhancing cultural tourism activities in rural areas.

This paper addresses issues of rural revitalization from the context of arts and culture in Europe. The concept of “culture-led regeneration” was first mentioned in the 1990s, and is driven by the objective to expand the depth and breadth of cultural life in the local communities through:

- Creating innovative, enjoyable, and high-quality arts experiences;
- Introducing new dynamics and encouraging creative solutions to problems;
- Engaging diverse communities;
- Nurturing and developing diverse art forms;
- Cultivating a wide range of artistic, human, and financial resources; and
- Developing an awareness of the social, critical, and practical functions of art-making.

As a result of the rapid economic development in Europe, cities are invading rural areas, making it more and more difficult to make a clear distinction between *urban* and *rural*. This is especially applicable to smaller and urbanised countries. EU member states often devise their own interpretation of the term *rural*.

Key factors in successful projects include a sensitivity to the nature of arts activity in rural areas, including the interaction between cultural heritage, contemporary art, and collective memory. In many rural communities there is not a clear distinction between *art* and *craft*. Many communities also face the choice between preserving traditional or classical forms of arts and culture, or exploring contemporary methods while incorporating their own unique expression.

Key issues and policy positions discussed in this paper include:

- Arts practices and social integration of immigrants in rural areas, along with a discussion of the Roma and other minorities;
- Connecting isolated communities through arts and culture and through a systemic and synergetic approach in revitalization efforts, including all partners involved;
- Artistic practices and social development of youth in rural areas;
- Revitalization of the numerous cultural and community centres (which were very active during the past socialist regime), spread in rural areas in many transition countries in Central and Eastern Europe; and
- Economic issues, including new funding initiatives of foundations in rural areas, the development of rural cultural tourism, the privatization of cultural institutions, and the role of the European Capital of Culture concept as a method of investing in cultural infrastructure.

Résumé

Les arts et la culture font partie intégrante du développement local. Dans une perspective sociale, ils sont des composantes essentielles de la qualité de vie car, plus l'offre des activités artistiques et culturelles est importante, plus le taux de satisfaction personnelle est élevé. Dans une perspective économique, l'essor du secteur culturel au sein d'une région rurale contribue à créer davantage d'emplois. En outre, cela a aussi une incidence sur la hausse des revenus qui découlent de la vente de biens et de services, ou sur l'essor des activités de tourisme culturel dans les régions rurales.

Cet article aborde les enjeux liés à la revitalisation urbaine dans le contexte des arts et de la culture en Europe. Le concept de « dynamisation par la culture » a été énoncé pour la première fois au cours des années 1990. Il s'inscrit dans une démarche qui a pour but d'approfondir et d'enrichir la vie culturelle au sein des collectivités locales, en :

- élaborant des expériences artistiques qui soient novatrices, agréables et de grande qualité;
- créant de nouvelles dynamiques et en favorisant l'élaboration de solutions créatives pour résoudre les problèmes;
- intéressant différentes communautés;
- éduquant et en concevant diverses formes d'art;
- exploitant un large éventail de ressources artistiques, humaines et financières;
- sensibilisant aux dimensions sociales, critiques et pratiques liées à la création artistique.

En réaction à l'essor économique soudain en Europe, les villes se sont accaparées les régions rurales, rendant ainsi de plus en plus difficile la distinction entre le lieu urbain et rural. C'est notamment le cas des pays plus petits et urbanisés. Qui plus est, les États membre de l'Union européenne tendent souvent à interpréter à leur manière ce que signifie le terme rural.

Les projets fructueux se caractérisent par la présence de facteurs clés, notamment la reconnaissance des particularités de l'activité artistique en milieu rural, telle la réciprocité entre le patrimoine culturel, l'art contemporain et la mémoire collective. En outre, il n'existe pas de distinction entre l'art et les métiers d'art dans nombre de collectivités rurales. Par ailleurs, de nombreuses communautés se voient confrontées à devoir choisir entre la sauvegarde des formes traditionnelles ou classiques de leur art et de leur culture, et chercher à adopter des méthodes contemporaines tout en y intégrant une expression qui leur soit propre.

Parmi les enjeux et les politiques clés dont fait état cet article, notons :

- les pratiques artistiques et l'intégration sociale des immigrants au sein des régions rurales, notamment un exposé sur diverses minorités, dont celle de Roma;
- les liens qui se tissent entre les régions isolées, par le biais des arts et de la culture ainsi que par l'entremise d'approches systémiques et synergiques dans les efforts de revitalisation, mettant à profit tous les acteurs du milieu;
- les pratiques artistiques et l'épanouissement social des jeunes au sein des régions rurales;

- la revitalisation des nombreux centres culturels et communautaires (tous très dynamiques sous le dernier régime socialiste) disséminés dans les régions rurales de nombre de pays en période de transition, au sein de l'Europe centrale et orientale;
- les questions d'ordre économique, dont de nouvelles initiatives en matière de financement à l'intention des régions rurales, l'essor du tourisme culturel en milieu rural, la privatisation des institutions culturelles, ainsi que le rôle joué par le programme des Capitales culturelles d'Europe, en tant que moyen pour investir dans les infrastructures culturelles.

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Developing and Revitalizing Rural Communities Through Arts and Creativity:

EUROPE

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1. Background

Culture and art are an integral part of local development. They are an essential component in the quality of life – the more choices people have to participate in cultural and artistic events, the more satisfied and happy they could feel. From an economic perspective, the development of the cultural sector in a rural area also contributes to creating more jobs, increasing revenues through selling goods and services, and enhancing cultural tourism activities.

This paper is a synthesis of key concepts, trends, and actions in Europe in regards to cultural development in rural areas. The information has been compiled through a review of literature and other resources, and synthesized for this paper. This work was guided by four key themes/questions:

- Are there critical ingredients or common themes necessary to build long-term vitality for the arts in rural communities?
- What existing research deals with this theme?
- What are the opportunities for and barriers to the sustainable development of creative/cultural businesses in rural and remote regions of Europe?
- What “good practice” projects/programs/partnerships/strategies are working in rural or remote regions? Who are the main funders?

Sources of information considered in this review included academic as well as policy- and planning-related documents from the local to pan-national levels:

- Documents of European cultural networks and platforms (international, national, and regional)
- Documents and publications of the European Commission and other intergovernmental organizations

- Country specific documents, publications, and projects
- Documents of municipalities and city councils
- Academic books and journals (universities, training centres, research institutes in Europe)
- Online resources (blogs, virtual libraries, portals, websites)
- Events of European networks, associations, and government bodies
- Databases of projects and case studies
- Databases of granted projects by foundations and other funders

2. Synthesis of key concepts, trends, and future actions in Europe

2.1. Rural and urban: Distinctive criteria

Rural and urban

In Europe today, the distinction between *rural* (or *remote*) and *urban* is not very clear. The general distinction is the one accepted by OECD, based on the density of the population: “A region is rural if more than half the people there live in communities with a population density of fewer than 150 persons per square kilometre” (cited in Smiles, 2006, p. 1). This is only one of many other approaches to define *rural* and *urban* areas. At the European Union level, there is no common definition. The European Commission Directorate-General VI has published a report on rural development (Boscacci, 1999), incorporating numerous variables relating to rurality, such as:

- areas which are not "urban";
- small number of people engaged in rural activities, including farmers;
- isolated areas where different social groups apply their own system of values, in other words, their tastes in leisure activity, styles of consumption, cultural preferences, etc.;
- landscape, or “the countryside”;
- a way of structuring and organisation of a territory where most of it is taken by agricultural activities;
- share of employment in the field of agriculture-the more agricultural jobs, the more area is considered as “rural”;
- the countryside's recreational vocation with footpaths, picnic areas, the rural heritage, etc.

Other criteria could include:

- accessibility of goods and services;
- opportunities for social interaction; and
- choices among the number of cultural, leisure, and entertainment activities on a territory.

As a result of rapid economic development in Europe, cities are invading rural areas, making it more and more difficult to make a clear distinction between *urban* and *rural*. This is especially applicable to small and urbanized countries (such as the Netherlands). Member states have generally developed their own definitions of rural areas. Thus, the term *rural communities* is used in different countries across Europe with diverse connotations. Angles of interpretation are:

- Small communities where density of population is very low;
- Isolated villages with small number of inhabitants;
- Small towns – up to 20 000 inhabitants;
- Underprivileged and culturally deprived groups living in small towns, villages and rural areas;
- People living in areas outside of big cities; and
- People having a collective memory at a certain rural territory, and having a *sense of place*.

Culture-led regeneration

The concept of *culture-led regeneration* was first mentioned in the 1990s. It is driven by an objective to expand the depth and breadth of cultural life in local communities through:

- Creating innovative, enjoyable and high-quality arts experiences;
- Introducing new dynamics and encouraging creative solutions to problems;
- Engaging diverse communities;
- Nurturing and developing diverse art forms;
- Cultivating a wide range of artistic, human, and financial resources; and
- Developing an awareness of the social, critical, and practical functions of art-making.

Art and craft

In many rural communities, there is not a clear distinction between what is an *art* and what is a *craft* work. This is because the development of diverse art forms (for example, music or dancing) is based on preserving traditions, following a “generational approach” and not necessarily connected with higher education or other agencies.

2.2. Rural communities – sustainable communities

Under Agenda 2000¹, the European Commission has made a priority of implementing a sustainable rural development policy. The historical context of how rural communities are formed and have been functioning through the years is different for each country. The new concept of *sustainable rural community development* looks at how people continually adapt to changing environmental, economic, social, and cultural realities. It recognizes the need to include culture and creativity in the sustainable economic and social plans and strategies for the development of rural areas. This is one of the ways of closely relating the quality of life of rural communities to the quality of their cultural expression, dialogue, and engagement.

Sustainability of a rural territory is based on the idea of a territory as a living ecosystem, combining diverse resources which need to be surveyed, acknowledged, and used in the most efficient way to be preserved and self-generated over a long-term period. Artistic work related to building sustainable communities in rural areas is an important aspect of culture-led regeneration programs.

2.3. Culture and arts in a territory: Between traditions and innovations

Artistic communities and cultural organizations located in a particular territory in Europe today face a dilemma between preserving the traditions of the region (classical forms of art, folk and crafts, customs, etc.) or developing contemporary art forms and stressing innovative characteristics in the arts processes.

The preservation of traditions through artistic practices and cultural organizations in rural areas across Europe occurs in several ways:

- Cultural policy instruments to assist cultural development in a certain region (direct and indirect help) – for example, special funds for traditional forms of art, support for specific organizations important for the regional development, programs for linking art with other areas, etc.
- A system of cultural and community centres (in South-Eastern Europe, especially in Bulgaria, called *Chitalishta*) – These centres were very popular in the past in Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia, Moldova, and few other countries, especially during the former socialist regime. They used to exist in almost every region, including the smallest villages and rural areas throughout the whole territory of a country, and their main mission was to link culture and education, to preserve national customs and traditions in a certain area, and to revive the spirit and attitude of the local population through culture (discussed further below).
- In rural areas, there are organizations whose mission is to preserve the cultural heritage of a region (museums), to work for improving the literacy of the population (libraries and educational organizations), and to bring joy and pleasure to daily life (performing arts and entertainment organizations). These regional organizations, located in urban areas, are the “milestones” in preserving the traditions, customs, and the heritage of a certain region.

¹ Agenda 2000 is an action programme whose main objectives are to strengthen European community policies and to give the European Union a new financial framework for the period 2000-06 with a view to enlargement.

- Families in rural areas are important caretakers of traditions and collective memories in a region. Family businesses (e.g., tourism, restaurants, craft work, small-scale entrepreneurship) are important for many rural areas as they help the local inhabitants earn money and feel engaged.

Innovative tools and strategies are slowly entering artistic practices and cultural organizations in rural and isolated areas. The emphasis in these cases is not necessarily only on innovative programs or implementing a new technology, but could cover all aspects of organizational or regional development. For example:

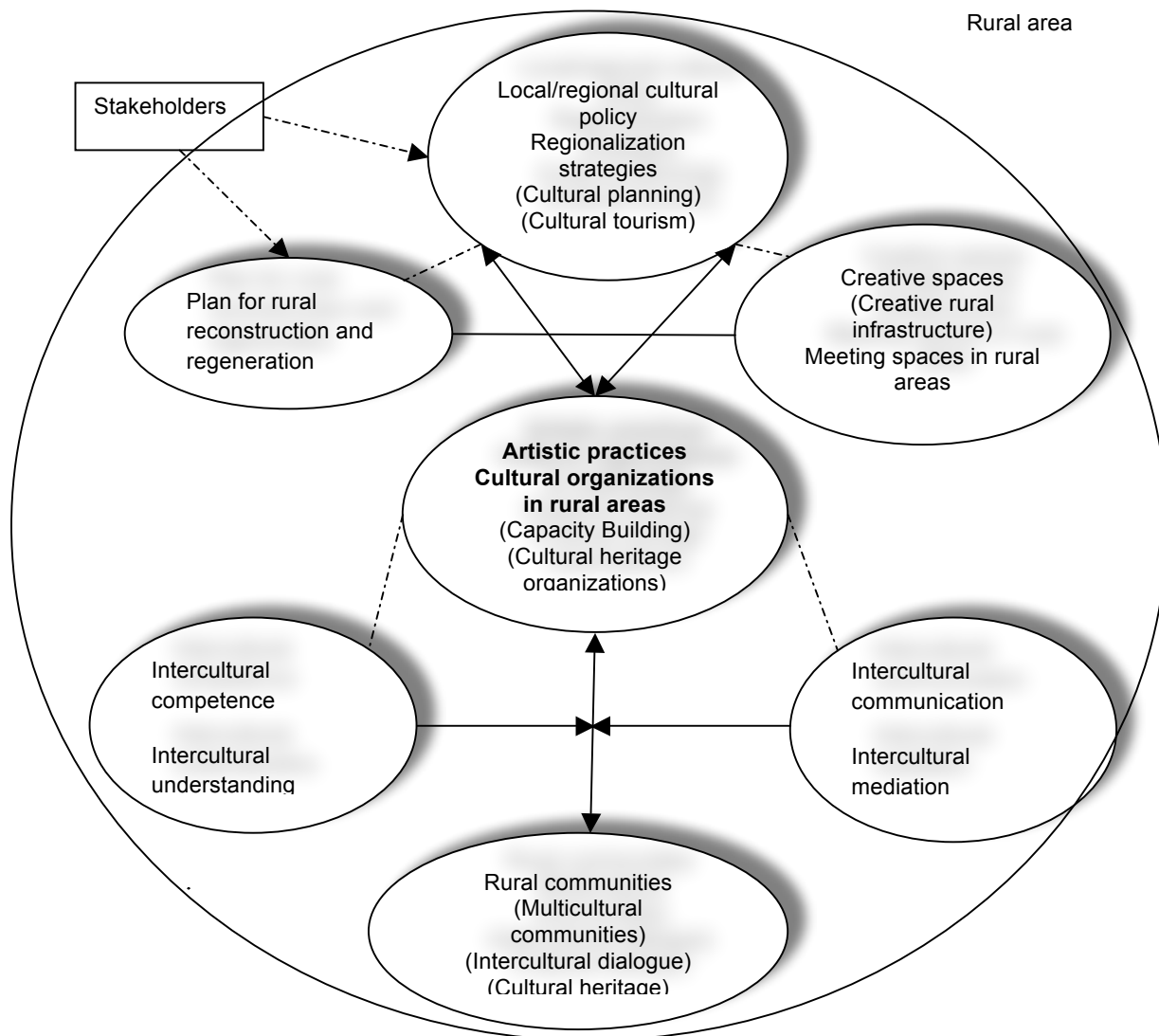
- Implementation of new creative programmes by artists living in rural areas
- Innovative changes in the “way of doing things”
- Searching for new resources, for example, the application of new fundraising ideas or activities in the region
- Searching for non-conventional places to open a new artistic program or organization, such as abandoned grain storage spaces, old factories, agricultural buildings, etc.
- Innovative ways of enhancing artistic mobility in a region, for example, touring library in a van, “theatre in a suitcase,” easy-to-move cultural productions, etc.
- Innovative artistic programs linked with the educational system of a region.

Different types of cultural organizations are more or less open to innovative tools. Organizations subsidized by a regional or a state budget tend to have more conventional programming, directed mainly towards the preservation of traditions. Non-profit organizations, in comparison, are much more flexible and can include innovative aspects much easier. There are few examples of commercial arts organizations in rural areas due to the underdeveloped (or non-existing) arts markets there, but there are cases of small-scale entrepreneurship based on regional crafts and traditions.

2.4. General terminology overview

Figure 1 provides an idea of the relations among different terminologies used in discussing how artistic practices could develop and revitalize rural communities.

Figure 1. Interrelations among terms related to arts and culture in rural areas



2.5. Key issues discussed in Europe

Several important issues are discussed in Europe on the theme of how arts and creativity could revitalize rural communities:

- Policies for regionalization and rural development considering culture and arts
- Artistic practices and social integration of immigrants in rural areas
- Connecting isolated communities through arts and culture
- Cultural heritage, contemporary art, and collective memory
- Foundations' new funding initiatives for artistic projects in rural areas
- Artistic practices and social development of youth
- Preservation of culture and access to culture of Roma and other minorities living in rural areas

Policies for regionalization and rural development considering culture and arts

It is widely accepted in theory that any local development is based on four main dimensions: economy (wealth); social inclusion (equity); environment (bio-eco system); and content that culture brings to individuals and society: creativity, diversity, shared memories, etc. Development of all these four dimensions should be an immense part of any local or regional strategic plan, but in many cases this is not the case. Regionalization policies of a national government are generally directed towards: (a) securing a higher-level decision-making power and (b) increasing the funding from national budgets flowing to the hands of regional authorities. Important unsolved questions in the area of regional policies for culture are:

- What could be the most efficient and effective ways to engage artists in policy decisions related to rural areas?
- To what extent do regionalization policies cover rural and isolated areas of a country (or do they concentrate only on regional cities and peripheral towns)?
- How can cultural policy for a rural area be connected with policies for agriculture, transport, and infrastructure development?

Artistic practices and social integration of immigrants in rural areas

As a result of increasing immigration in Europe (especially as a result of the accession process), there are areas – more in the cities, but also in isolated regions – which have become a terrain for conflicts and contradiction and, in some cases, explode even into violent forms in the neighbourhoods where the most marginalized people live. Economic and social exclusion of immigrant communities is often dealt with through cultural and social policies on a regional level aiming at strengthening the distinctive cultural identities of different communities by enabling them to have their own cultural voice. In practice, this policy often is directed into the creation of cultural centres in those communities. Common questions for further discussion are:

- How do regional cultural policies use artistic programs to mitigate challenges and problems linked to communities that are marginalized, poor, and under-skilled?
- What are the tools for cross-sectoral and cross-issue partnership?

- Who are the local stakeholders and how could they be involved in the processes of social integration?
- What is the advocacy and lobbying potential of local artistic networks for influencing policy decisions related to social integration?

Connecting isolated communities through arts and culture

Arts and culture are not only increasingly becoming a source of economic growth, but are also powerful tools for social integration as they can help develop a shared sense of identity and belonging. A focus point in well-elaborated regional plans is the improvement of the quality of life in cities and rural areas with respect to different age groups, social strata, and lifestyles. Rural areas could become economically and socially divided as a result of badly planned or wrongly implemented planning. This often leads to conflict and lowers their international image. Isolated communities and marginalized groups often do not have the same access to diverse art forms as other citizens have. By default, artists tend to work in isolation and they do not necessarily recognize the need to interact with communities and to engage marginalized groups of the population. Important points that are raising debates in Europe are:

- How could a policy for regeneration of a rural area build bridges between artistic practices and isolated communities?
- What are the tools to engage different communities into an intercultural dialogue, using the potential of a renovated infrastructure in an isolated town or a village?
- How do artists integrate innovative elements in their artistic work, targeting isolated communities?
- What artistic practices and mediation tools exist for a dynamic collaboration between artists and communities?

Cultural heritage, contemporary art, and collective memory

Cultural heritage reflects past relationships, accomplishments, challenges, and hopes of citizens. Heritage is related with our sense of identity and people's pride of belonging to a place. Local and regional museums are an important part of a community's culture – they are in a way responsible for preserving the collective memory as they are dedicated to accumulation, documentation, exposing, and teaching the heritage and history. On the other hand, contemporary art, exhibited in both commercial and public galleries and non-conventional places (as far as they exist in the rural areas), do not have a permanent character by nature. The public does not always have positive attitude towards contemporary art – it might accept it as odd, especially in cases when contemporary art does not reflect certain public values, or is too complex to be easily understood. Therefore, education and interaction between contemporary artists and communities is an important element to improve public acceptance of the practice of contemporary artists in rural and isolated regions. Points of discussion in this respect usually include:

- How are contemporary artistic practice and cultural heritage development integrated (or isolated) in a rural area?
- To what extent is the contemporary art in an isolated area the “collective memory” of the future?

- What are possible partnership strategies for connecting local artistic networks with cultural heritage sites?

Foundations' new funding initiatives for artistic projects in rural areas

There are several key foundations in Europe supporting arts and cultural projects in rural areas (see the list in Annex C). Their programs are directed towards:

- Cross-border cooperation between isolated communities;
- Using art as a powerful engine for rural revitalization; and
- Engaging isolated audiences in artistic and cultural events.

Some of them specifically support projects from Central, Eastern, and South-Eastern Europe, or the Mediterranean region, as rural areas in this part of Europe are much less advanced. These foundations include: European Cultural Foundation; Kulturkontakt, Austria; Pro Helvetia Swiss Cultural Programme; Roberto Cimetta Fund; among others. Special attention is paid to countries bordering the European Union, such as Moldova, Belarus, and Ukraine. Important issues are:

- What are the tools and methods of partnership among funders related to a certain region?
- How does the external support (through foundations and other means) align with the regionalization policy of a certain country?
- How can regional and local funds for artistic development and artistic mobility be set up?

Artistic practices and social development of youth

Involvement in the arts, culture, entertainment, and media activities is an important motivating factor for young people to live in a certain place. It builds self-esteem and confidence, develops creativity, and motivates thinking. Arts activities also help to develop leadership and decision-making skills, and provide young people with a means of self-expression and self-understanding. The more cultural, economic, artistic, and social opportunities existing in a territory, the more chances for the young people to live and work in this area. One of the problems related to young people leaving rural areas is the absence of vital cultural life. The following important questions are often debated at European events related to youth participation in artistic events in rural areas:

- How can artistic practices in rural areas influence the social and economic integration of young people?
- What are innovative practices for the creative engagement of youth coming from different multicultural backgrounds and living in the same territory, far from the cities?
- How can educational curricula contribute to promoting creativity and the link between arts and communities in rural areas?

Preservation of culture and access to culture for Roma and other minorities living in rural areas

This issue is very connected with cultural rights within the framework of the protection of different multicultural communities and “vulnerable categories” of people. From this perspective, the issue of the Romani community (communities) represents a good example focusing on human rights principles versus cultural traditions. It happens often that there are obstacles which prevent the Roma population from accessing cultural services and opportunities, and from expressing their cultural identity. Cultural policies for a certain region and existing artistic practices are targeted towards institutional development (such as protecting heritage, art galleries, the performing arts, libraries, and museums) and not necessarily focusing on the needs of multicultural communities and underprivileged groups of the population in a rural area. Discussions in this respect try to solve questions such as:

- How do we identify young talents among isolated communities?
- What are the ways to preserve local traditions and cultures of minority groups and “small languages and dialects”?
- How do we encourage artistic projects which provide employment opportunities for representatives of minority groups?
- What are ways to mobilize communities to be more attentive towards the needs and the uniqueness of minorities in a region?
- How can the creation of cultural spaces from abandoned sites (e.g., buildings, factories, bus stations, etc.) be done with the inclusion of local community members?

2.6. Initiatives, methods, and policy directions used in Europe for revitalizing arts and culture in rural communities

Six key themes emerge within European initiatives for revitalizing arts and culture in rural communities:

- Capacity building for cultural organizations in rural areas
- Revitalizing former cultural and community centres (the *Chitalishta* system)
- Development of rural cultural tourism
- Privatization methods
- The European Capital of Culture concept
- Systematic and synergetic approaches towards revitalizing rural communities through arts and culture

Capacity building for cultural organizations in rural areas

Capacity building refers to an overall transformation, based on improving an organization’s own abilities and using its own resources to do so. In many cases this transformation is the result of a substantial process of education and investing in human resources, as the people in the organization develop a set of competences and skills to gradually transform the organization. Many international organizations provide capacity building support to less developed countries in Europe to help them to cope with turbulent environments or to adapt to a changed economic and political system. In other cases, national or regional governments

use capacity building strategies in rural areas to empower the third (non-profit) sector, or a specific branch where substantial help is required such as nature and environment, health care, non-profit organizations working with children and youth, communities in isolated areas, etc.

The Capacity Development programme of the European Cultural Foundation helps transform local cultural communities, enabling them to work closely with policymakers in order to transform cultural life where they live. The programme operates in Central and Eastern Europe, South East Europe, Russia, Turkey, and the southern Mediterranean.

Revitalizing former cultural and community centres (the *Chitalishta* system)

As mentioned above, *Chitalishte* is a unique institution with a special place in the history of some of the Balkan countries. The first Chitalishta appeared in the 1850s in Bulgaria as "reading houses" but their role gradually evolved and they assumed additional responsibilities, with education and charity being the most important ones. In other countries, they are called "local cultural and community centres" and exist in almost every city and village, including isolated areas. The existing network of Chitalishta consists of approximately 3,600 cultural and community centres through a territory of 110,000 sq. kilometres and a population of 7,500,000 inhabitants. In the past, these centres offered equal participation and universal access to services on a democratic basis and without discrimination. They have become one of the most respected and enduring institutions as they played a critical role in the processes of national consolidation and modernization in many former socialist countries in Europe.

With the initiation of reforms at the beginning of the 1990s, the cultural and community centres faced the challenge of adapting their activities to the new socio-economic conditions and the rapidly changing values and needs. The state subsidy for these centres has dramatically decreased and most of them have downsized their staff and limited the scope of their activities. They still have an important role to play, and the new national and local policies of the countries where they exist are directed towards their revitalization and sustainability in the future.

Development of rural cultural tourism

Development of cultural tourism activities by families living in rural areas is an important way to:

- Strengthen social cohesion and establish common ground between generations;
- Create an opportunity to foster access to, and participation in, regional cultural life;
- Promote and preserve traditions and the cultural heritage of a rural area;
- Connect people from different cultural background and countries;
- Reinforce community identity, distinctiveness, and collective pride; and
- Use a percentage of tourism revenues on the local level for reinvestment in specific, targeted projects and initiatives.

The concept of *creative tourism* (pioneered by New Zealand) is becoming popular in Europe as well. This is a more substantial form of cultural tourism that provides more active ways to

involve tourists in workshops, creative experiences, cultural holidays, craft work, family traditions, and other activities.

Any strategy for family-based cultural tourism development should be developed with care, as there are challenges facing this means of revitalizing rural communities. A few of them are:

- This type of tourism puts plenty of demands on the infrastructure and insurances (roads, airports, fire protection, etc.).
- Communities must ensure that the invasion of tourists in a rural area does not destroy the natural and cultural heritage due to over-exploitation.
- It requires communication and visibility. Many rural areas are isolated and families can hardly promote their arts and craft-based entrepreneurship activities.
- It involves a high degree of risks and uncertainty.

Privatization methods

Privatization strategies are predetermined by the overall cultural policy directions. Over the last almost 20 years there have been many discussions about the pros and cons of privatizing cultural organizations, and the methods and criteria to do it, including both urban areas and isolated regions. The main problem is that there are cultural heritage units, regional reserves, and natural sites of a national value that face the danger of being privatized. Privatization in these cases creates lots of fears – possible over-commercialization when a property becomes private, possible shifting of the aims and objectives of the organization after the privatization process, disappearance of the state direct control, and fear of losing traditional forms of art or cultural heritage sites. Therefore, privatization methods in culture have to be applied carefully, in cooperation with all stakeholders involved, listening to public opinion, and under government regulation. It is important to outline that privatization in culture does not mean just changing the ownership to public hands for the purpose of gaining profit. The aims could be different, such as providing greater autonomy and more flexible style of operations, increasing the involvement of private funding, and motivating an entrepreneurship thinking and action in the arts.

The European Capital of Culture concept

The “European Capital of Culture” (ECOC) is a title given to a city by the European Union for a period of one year. During this time, the city is given a chance to showcase its cultural life and cultural development on a broad European and international platform. The ECOC concept is a way to invest in a local infrastructure and to revitalize certain geographic/ neighbourhood areas with the aim to foster overall cultural life in a city or a region. It is mainly a “city-orientated” strategy for development, but the experience throughout the years shows that it is a powerful way to bring revenues, international visibility, and attention to a whole region, sometimes including small cities and isolated regions (for example, Antwerp in 1993; Thessaloniki in 1997, Weimar in 1999; Bergen and Bologna in 2000; Porto in 2001; Bruges and Salamanca in 2002; Genoa in 2004; Patras in 2006; Sibiu in 2007; and Stavanger in 2008). The ECOC strategy helps to revitalize local life, attract tourists, improve local cultural infrastructure, and invest in creative activities in a region.

A number of European cities have used this opportunity to transform visibly – and, in some cases, completely! – their cultural infrastructure, to better involve artists and communities in

cultural experiences, to boost the local economy, to attract tourists, and to improve the city's visibility abroad. The ECOC guidelines recommend that cities consider four key issues when bidding for the title:

- Strategic vision and planning, incorporating clear cultural tourism objectives
- Involving local people and integrating local culture
- Management structures and partnership development
- Legacy of the process and programme

As early as 1991, the organizers of the European Capital of Culture programme created the Network of European Cultural Capitals and Months (ECCM). Based in Luxembourg, the network enabled the exchange and dissemination of information, primarily among organizers of the events. In 1994, the network carried out one of the first comprehensive studies on the impact of the European Capital of Culture programme since its creation. A very recent development of ECOC is the new Athens Documentation Centre on Capitals of Culture (created few months ago), which aims to gather all information relevant to past, current, and future Capitals. Materials from more than 35 past capitals and months of culture have been gathered, following an information grid/questionnaire covering the following areas: socio-economic, historical, and cultural context; the cultural year experience (objectives, problems faced, results); artistic programmes; social programmes; publications (catalogues, newsletters, etc.); cultural infrastructure (existing and creation of new venues); and evaluation.

The 2009 European Capitals of Culture are Vilnius (Lithuania) and Linz (Austria).

Systematic and synergetic approaches towards revitalizing rural communities through arts and culture

Many European countries realize that revitalizing rural communities through culture is not a “one-man-show” and should be done in close cooperation with all players and stakeholders in a region – local government, business, agricultural organizations, environmental organizations, and organizations dealing with social, educational, and health issues. Partnership-building is an important way to put policies into practice. It also helps to explore hidden resources in a region and to look at how they could be used in a “synergetic approach” for overall cultural development. Treating culture as part of the overall development of an area (not as an isolated silo of activities) also increases employment opportunities – a strong motivation factor for people to live and create in peripheral areas. Effectively using existing infrastructure, revitalizing abandoned areas, and improving facilities for isolated communities to create more attractive and open spaces requires a long-term public–private partnership as well (see the list of active foundations and funders at end).

Solutions to other important problems may be found only in well-elaborated partnership frameworks. For example:

- The use of the new technologies in rural areas where access to internet is bad, or non-existent
- Solving language issues in areas where multicultural populations live

- Dealing with conflict prevention in urban areas located at the borders between countries (especially between the European Union members and “neighbouring” countries, for example between Poland, Lithuania, Belarus, and Ukraine)
- Building civil society platforms in rural areas where people are less aware of the power of participation in policy decision-making. A variety of rural networks, forums, and platforms have been created in the last few years to help in this process (see the list included with this paper).

2.7. Good practice projects in rural regions

Annex A presents selected projects from different European countries (European Union member states and non-member states, as well as cross-border projects) which have proven to be efficient and bring quality results. It also provides a comprehensive list of online databases of projects and case studies on the topic. The main activities and directions of development in these projects are:

- Investment in local festivals
- Building up public spaces as meeting-point for discussions among artists, between artists and communities
- Artistic programs to bring together multicultural groups with different ethnic, religious and language background
- Cultural initiatives contributing to preservation of natural resources in a remote region
- Involvement of immigrants into local cultural and artistic activities
- Cultural exchanges between rural communities from different countries
- Improving cultural programming of existing cultural and community centres in remote regions and adapting it to diverse groups of the population
- Lobbying and advocacy measures
- Special educational and cultural programs for marginal groups of the population in an isolated region
- Promotion of sustainable cultural and heritage projects
- Artistic experiments and innovative programs for young people in rural areas
- Artistic residences

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Annex A.

Case studies and projects – Europe

Annex A compiles and presents a wide array of arts-related projects and initiatives occurring in rural and/or remote areas of Europe, so that they may serve as sources of inspiration, ideas, and knowledge for possible projects elsewhere.

A1. COUNTRY / REGION-BASED PROJECTS

Albania: Creative cities, Shkodra and Pogradec
Albania: Andersen Friends Association
Bulgaria: Art horizons – European cultural youth house, Kardjali
Bulgaria: Community development and participation through the Chitalishte network
Croatia: Ugrožena cestica – endangered particle
Ireland: Údarás na Gaeltachta five-year arts strategy
Italy: Teatro di Nacosto – Hidden Theatre
Macedonia: Confluent Margins
Macedonia: Small door / Community culture initiatives, Tetovo
Montenegro: Cross-sector cooperation in service of sustainable cultural development, YUSTAT Centre
Romania: Preserving Romania's cultural heritage
Romania: cARTier, Iasi
Slovenia: Art centre
Slovenia: Roma assistants
Switzerland: KulturMobil (1984 – 2004)
United Kingdom: Green Close Studios
United Kingdom: Art connections: Chrysalis Arts
United Kingdom: Rural migrant worker project: Cumbria multi-cultural service
United Kingdom: Revitalizing rural Scotland
United Kingdom: Cream of the crop: Case studies in good practice in arts development in rural areas of the North West of England
United Kingdom: Rural Arts Wiltshire
United Kingdom: Rural Virtues: Impact of arts touring in rural areas
United Kingdom: The same, but different: Rural arts touring in Scotland, the case of theatre

A2. CROSS-BORDER (INTERNATIONAL) PROJECTS

Connection Barents
Born in Europe
Cultures from around the block
Hidden Spirits
Laboratories of cross-cultural practices
Living Heritage
Heritage, memory, local population
Meeting the other: Borders, identity and cultures on the European space – Project of Babelmed and partners
Migrants: A model for successful integration
TATAPUME – “Radiotherapy” about the history of migration in Europe
The other Europeans

A3. ARTISTIC RESIDENCES IN RURAL AREAS

Gulliver Connect programme – mobility and arts work placement programme

Italy: Fabrica

Italy: UNIDEE in residence international programme

A3. ONLINE DATABASES OF CASE STUDIES

Arts Council England, The Arts in Rural England: Database of projects

European Cultural Foundation: Database of Granted projects (2007-08)

IFACCA research

Intercultural Dialogue: Best Practices at Community Level

Intercultural Map, Database of Projects

Kulturkontakt: Database of Projects and Partners in Central and Eastern Europe

LabforCulture: Case studies section

Swiss Cultural Program for the Western Balkans, projects section

A1. COUNTRY / REGION-BASED PROJECTS

Albania: Creative cities, Shkodra and Pogradec

www.sdc.admin.ch/en/Home/Projects/Archive_Projects_completed/Creative_Cities_in_Albania

A Pro-Helvetia program in two small cities:

Shkodra, historically the cultural capital of Albania but today marginalized and run down, is situated in the North close to the border with Montenegro. The main focus here is directed to building up public space: painting facades; organizing "creative coffees" as a meeting point for discussions among artists, intellectuals, and the other inhabitants of Shkodra; and revitalizing the historical tradition of carnival. With these activities, the hope is that participation and the confidence of the city will be rekindled and Shkodra will become a better place to live.

In Pogradec, a small town situated at the shores of Ohrid lake and close to Macedonia and Greece, the activities focus around existing cultural events, but adding new momentum to them: the poetry festival is upgraded to a regional one; the theatre tradition, especially puppet theatre, is revitalized; and painted doors highlight important points of the town. Locally produced food and wines are being presented at the food and wine days. Pogradec's aim is to join the international "Slow City Movement" and offer authentic local goods – both food and culture – without jeopardizing nature and environment.

Albania: Andersen Friends Association

This project of the Theatre OF and FOR Children & Youth focuses on the development of children's theatre in the rural zone of northern Albania (a form of theatre currently non-existent in this region). It will present themes and storylines originating from the social reality of the children involved, instead of more traditional fairytale storylines. To enable this, there

will also be a workshop for Albanian writers for children's theatre. Part of the project will focus on the Roma community.

Bulgaria: Art horizons – European cultural youth house, Kardjali

www.pro-helvetia.ch/cms/mediaserver/repository/fw40_mandator_0214/2/SCP/en/847.pdf

In the South of Bulgaria, a region with a big Turkish minority, the organization KRUG (circle) is establishing a youth cultural centre. It consists of two *zones*: a “professional zone” based in the gallery in the city of Kardjali and a “live zone” in the neighbouring village of Duzhdovnitsa, where young people were engaged in renovating the building of a former Koran school.

Bulgaria: Community development and participation through the Chitalishte network

www.chitalishte.bg/chitalishta_project.php

Chitalishte is a project of the Ministry of Culture of Bulgaria and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), with the support of the MATRA Programme of the Netherlands government and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The goal of the project is to strengthen the community role of the Chitalishte as traditional cultural and educational centres and offer working models for their modernization and participation in local community development. Three hundred Chitalishte have been selected as permanent partners of the project and they are entitled to participate in all the activities and competitions organized under it. Another 600 Chitalishte have access to a narrower range of activities. Six public information units operating within Regional Centres inform the public about the mission and activities of the United Nations Development Programme and other donor organizations.

Croatia: Ugrozena cestica – endangered particle

www.labforculture.org/Case-studies/Contents/Projects/Case-Studies-Analytical-Approach/Ugrozena-cestica

The focus of this artistic project is places that have suffered from forest fires and burning due to extensive tourism. The final aim is the re-forestation of one or more burned areas. This complex art–communication–ecological project includes many different segments and therefore many different activities. The two partners from Croatia are Dolphin's Dreams and [BLOK]. Dolphin's Dream brings into the project specific knowledge of the protection of the environment, re-forestation, and sensitizing the public about these problems, while [BLOK] brings into the project knowledge and experience in formatting artistic segments and initiating art–communication processes.

Ireland: Údarás na Gaeltachta five-year arts strategy

www.udaras.ie/

A five-year partnership between the Arts Council of Ireland and Údarás na Gaeltachta, the local authority for the Gaeltacht or Irish-speaking parts of Ireland (which is overwhelmingly rural) is concerned with the potential of arts/cultural initiatives to contribute to the sustainability of rural, coastal, and island communities, particularly where a minority language is spoken. The plan sees Gaeltacht shifting its emphasis from traditional

manufacturing industries to cultural tourism, language-based industries, the arts, and small indigenous industries.

Italy: Teatro di Nacosto – Hidden Theatre

www.interculturaldialogue.eu/web/icd-good-practice.php?aid=44

Project description

Teatro di Nacosto, set up in 1998 in Volterra, Tuscany, by Annet Henneman and Gianni Calistri, is a theatre of reportage, combining journalism and drama performed by refugee and asylum-seeker actors. The theatre grew out of the artistic director's (Henneman) work, with the famous prison theatre in Volterra, drawing on the innate storytelling and performance skills of prisoners who had no prior experience with theatre. It also drew on dialect theatre, Neapolitan songs, and hard physical training. Originally it focused on the plight of the Kurdish people, gathering material from the countries from which the refugees had fled and building characters out of real-life stories. They put on a Kurdish evening (*Serrata kurda*) set in a refugee camp with the performance of refugee stories, a Kurdish meal, and a glass of tea. *Far from Kurdistan – Lontano dal Kurdistan/Ji Kurdistan durem*, based on experiences of torture, escape, and the mixed emotions of exile, followed in 1999, mixing witness accounts with photographs, songs, and dance. The second major production, *The Patience of Job – Sebri Eyub/La Pazienza di Giobbe*, focused on Iranian Kurdistan, following a visit to Kermanshah, Islam Abat, and Tehran after they were prevented from entering Iraq. The play dealt with blocked aspirations of exiles in Iran waiting to go to Europe or to Iraq to find their families and included a Kurdish actor, Adil Yalcin, who then joined the company. In 2001 they expanded their theme to the underlying conditions generating refugees with *The Scale of Poverty – La Scala di Povertà*, combining stories gathered from the homeless sleeping outside Rome central station with those from Calcutta and Kurdistan.

Main actions

The training in reportage is intercultural, requiring the actors to enter another culture, so they have lived with children whose parents have fled, met women whose sons have been tortured to death, become schooled in Muslim culture, and learnt Arabic language and Kurdish dancing. In 2002, Henneman set up an academy with three-year theatre training for asylum seekers and refugees, to train them to enact their own stories. Ten students from Africa, Afghanistan, and Kurdistan made up the first intake. They live together with the directors of Teatro di Nacosto in a communal house, engaging in cultural exchange of traditions, languages, and religions, learning Italian, English, and computer skills that equip them as intercultural mediators in Italy. They also share the psychological burden of uncertain status which was very severe under the Bossi Fini law; board and lodging allowance was removed from seven of the Academy's ten students who became asylum rejects, leaving them illegal and destitute. Nevertheless, the theatre continued to work, producing and performing the show *Refusals – Dinieghi*, based on the actors' own stories of exile and asylum rejection, with the voice of a "Committee" deciding their fate offstage, while onstage they answered questions in their own language simultaneously, interspersed with songs and dances performed by a Rwandan dancer.

Results

So effective was the performance that played to over 1,000 people in Milan Central station in 2002, that Mediciens sans Frontières, Amnesty International, and ICS Network invited the company to participate in their international campaign "Right to Asylum – A Civic Question." They paid for 40 performances to be staged over three years in theatres, schools,

stations, public squares, and at conferences. In 2005, the theatre began the Refugees project *Rifugia-ti*, which they have just performed in the European Parliament, and are currently producing *City of War – Città di Guerra*.

Lessons learned

The company's activities has widened public access to the experience of asylum seekers and refugees, through performing in unorthodox public spaces as well as theatres and schools. Through relying on direct storytelling by the victims, it has engaged in a process of mass communication counteracting the demonized and racialized portrayal of asylum and refugees by the mass media, engaging the audience in a process of education, empathy, and emotional/ethical transformation. It further engages the audience through discussion and socializing after performances. It has enabled destitute and impoverished asylum seekers and refugees to survive through shared living and learning, imparting exemplary intercultural training. It has mobilized financial and in-kind support from local, provincial, and regional governments, individuals, and voluntary organizations, both within Italy and internationally, and has created an international network of supporters which has grown in political influence within the European arena.

Macedonia: Confluent Margins

www.pro-helvetia.ch/cms/mediaserver/repository/fw40_mandator_0214/2/SCP/en/843.pdf

Confluent Margins aims at intensifying cultural production and exchange between towns in Macedonia and their creative groups and individuals. The project is especially focused on young and innovative artists and intellectuals of different social and ethnic backgrounds. The project aims to deconstruct closed cultural identities and foster decentralization and de-monopolization.

Macedonia: Small door / Community culture initiatives, Tetovo

<http://smalldoor.org.mk/about.html>

A cooperation project of the Centre for Balkan Cooperation LOJA from Tetovo and the Contemporary Art Centre from Skopje, it is dedicated to the improvement of cultural and social life and interethnic relations in the town of Tetovo and the region of western Macedonia through:

- Creating cultural infrastructure in Tetovo and the region of western Macedonia
- Improving cultural production and audience cultural animation in Tetovo and the region of western Macedonia
- Involving different ethnic community members in Tetovo and western Macedonia in solving common social problems through cultural activities
- Establishing a best practice model for cooperation in Macedonia.

Montenegro: Cross-sector cooperation in service of sustainable cultural development, YUSTAT Centre

www.yustat.org

This project aims to promote culture as a significant aspect of sustainable development of a strong society and to stimulate cross-sector cooperation in contemporary artistic production. Through advocating, lobbying, and organizing a forum which will bring together

representatives of various cultural institutions, recommendations will be developed for policy-makers in Serbia focusing on cross-sector cooperation in the field of culture.

Romania: Preserving Romania's cultural heritage

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/dialogue/catal_dial_en.pdf

Context

Unique historic monuments in Romania are under threat, and in need of urgent restoration and conservation. A lack of specialist expertise to tackle the technical problems makes the situation more acute. But now, a placement programme has enabled Romanian conservation students to work and study alongside Italian experts on a project in Sicily. The knowledge the students have gained will help save Romania's monuments and train other Romanian professionals in this field.

Activities and results

In order to accelerate the training of Romanian conservation specialists, a group of ten students from the University of Art and Design in Cluj-Napoca visited Italy under a placement scheme. They studied alongside experts in the Accademia di Belle Arte e del Restauro in Palermo. Work focussed on a practical project involving the restoration of a baroque fresco in the Oneto Palace in Palermo. Students gained knowledge of investigative procedures to determine the materials and artistic techniques used, recognition of specific types of damage, and the technical procedures needed to repair these.

The students have returned to Romania with new specialist expertise which is unique in the country. They will now be able to apply this to national restoration projects and, with their new skills and knowledge of European norms and terminology, they can contribute to the training of other professionals. A larger and more highly skilled workforce in the restoration and conservation field is a significant contribution to the protection of Romania's cultural heritage. In this way, a unique culture will be preserved and made more accessible not just to Romanian but also to other European citizens, thus promoting intercultural understanding.

Romania: cARTier, Iasi

www.pro-helvetia.ch/cms/mediaserver/repository/fw40_mandator_0214/2/SCP/en/843.pdf

The project aims to culturally rehabilitate the Tatarasi district in Iasi through the active participation of the inhabitants in cultural activities, which will lead to the improvement of the quality of life and to the development of an enhanced community consciousness.

Slovenia: Art centre

www.artcenter-slovenia.org

This is a program of short residencies and presentations in rural communities in Prekmurje, one of the poorest regions of Slovenia. Local inhabitants will be involved in the creative process with European artists who will present exhibitions and performances in the villages.

The Art Center building is located in an abandoned Ex-YU military guardhouse near the Slovenian-Hungarian border. The municipality of Moravske Toplice purchased the abandoned guardhouse from the Ministry of Defence and established the Art Center institute together with the municipality of Šalovci, the Onej Society, the Association of Slovenian Artists, and the Society of Prekmurje and Prlekija Artists.

The multi-functional facility represents the basis for implementing numerous creative and educational projects from various areas of cultural/artistic creation. Organizational and creative know-how, developing in the Art Center, are available to many organizations and individuals on both side of the border and more widely. For this rural and poor area of Slovenia, the Art Center plays a very important role for local community, and especially for young people. This is the first Residential Art Center in Slovenia.

Because of a lack of funding, the Center is in a danger of being closed.

Slovenia: Roma assistants

www.interculturaldialogue.eu/web/icd-good-practice.php?aid=44

Context

According to the Slovene National Action Plan on Social Inclusion 2004-2006 (NAP), Roma are the only ethnic community with the risk of poverty and social exclusion as a group. Thus, special policies and measures for the promotion of their social inclusion are envisaged in the following areas: employment, education, housing, and help with integration into society. The NAP states:

Members of the Roma community are characterized by a low level of education and inadequate functional literacy. Owing to their deficient knowledge of Slovenian, Roma children have difficulties as soon as they enrol in kindergarten or primary school. All of this creates problems with inclusion in society. Slovenia will try to invest greater effort in including Roma children in full-time education.

Objectives

One of the objectives of the special education policy for Roma is ensuring the conditions for attaining standards of knowledge that are needed for further education, taking into consideration that a reduction of or variance from the standard for Roma is not acceptable.

Project description

In 2004, the first training of Roma assistants took place in Prekmurje. Also in 2004, the Regional Development Agency Mura and the Pomurje Centre launched a one-year pilot programme of introducing the Roma assistants within the project Roma Education and Information Centre. Since November 2005, in Prekmurje, 15 Roma assistants have been placed through the programme of public works. The Project Roma Education and Information Centre was coordinated by the Regional Development Agency Mura Ltd and was financed by the Community Initiative EQUAL. The general objective of the partnership is to improve the Roma community situation in Slovenia. Anticipated results of the project are: the establishment of the national professional standard of a Roma assistant, education and training of the first generation of the Roma assistants, introduction of the Roma assistants' work in schools and evaluation of their work, and the establishment of the Roma Education and Information Centre as an means for helping the Roma community. "Roma mentors" should become an operational connection for helping the Roma population to improve its education and qualifications, to solve its social problems, and to gain employment and motivation for achieving essential changes in individual lives (i.e., raising personal and social aspirations).

Results

The project shows the importance of:

- Participation
- Promoting individual empowerment
- Developing collective responsibility and capacity for action
- Participation in the project design
- Participation in running and evaluating activities
- Changing attitudes and behaviour of key actors

Switzerland: KulturMobil (1984 – 2004)

www.pro-helvetia.ch

KulturMobil is socio-cultural community work in Switzerland, supported by Pro Helvetia and the Swiss Arts Council. The project is based on the premise that things that concern everyone are best dealt with together. KulturMobil supported and supervised up to 18 projects annually in rural and remote areas of Switzerland. The program aided individuals and groups organizing cultural or social projects in their communities. Experienced facilitators from Pro Helvetia helped to plan, develop, and realize the projects by working with the people in the communities to formulate objectives, to find the right means of expression, to develop a budget and timetable, and to solve administrative questions.

KulturMobil facilitated flexible cultural promotion and encouraged a comprehensive concept of culture that includes everyday community life and communication.

United Kingdom: Green Close Studios

www.greenclosestudios.co.uk

Established in 1998 in Yorkshire, United Kingdom, Green Close Studios is a non-profit distributing company that exists to provide studio and workshop facilities for four professional artists and offer a range of creative workshops to the local community and beyond. It holds two annual exhibitions a year.

United Kingdom: Art connections: Chrysalis Arts

www.art-connections.org.uk/

Since 2002, the project has supported artists and business development and particularly aims to address the barriers to the development of a creative industries infrastructure in the rural areas of North Yorkshire. The project gives visual artists living in the rural area of North Yorkshire, the opportunity to develop skills in marketing. Support services include a series of specific marketing, networking, and promotional events; a directory of North Yorkshire artists and makers; and an information service providing a telephone help line, website, and newsletter. A business cluster was developed, including Chrysalis Art and 12 creative businesses and suppliers. The cluster offers their skills, services, and knowledge of Public Art Commissions for a number of clients including schools, health centres, the corporate sector, and private individuals.

United Kingdom: Rural migrant worker project: Cumbria multi-cultural service

www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/files/Cumbria%2021.pdf

Context

One of the largest shire counties in England, Cumbria's glorious landscapes and stunning coastal scenery has, at its heart, the Lake District National Park. The region's city is Carlisle and its main towns are Barrow-in-Furness, Whitehaven, Workington, Penrith, and Kendal. Much of the rest of Cumbria is deeply rural and very sparsely populated. The coastal region to the west has a rich industrial heritage, and is now undergoing some regeneration. Incomes in the region are below both national and regional averages.

Aims

The Cumbria Multi-Cultural Service provides information and confidential advocacy support to migrant workers from all communities, particularly Eastern Europeans. The Service was originally set up to meet the needs of Kosovan refugees who arrived in Barrow-in-Furness during the war in 2000. Many of these clients have now returned to their home country, moved elsewhere in the U.K., or settled in Cumbria.

The Cumbria Multi-Cultural Service helps workers in the following ways:

- Providing information and advice on employment, housing, legal status, asylum and immigration matters, the Workers Registration Scheme, National Insurance, pensions, health insurance, child benefits, and other rights and responsibilities.
- Offering advocacy for clients who require more detailed, one-to-one support in dealing with other agencies, for example in relation to service delivery by local public authorities such as education authorities and Social Services.
- Facilitating access to courses on IT and English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL) and to other services such as counselling.

United Kingdom: Revitalizing rural Scotland

<http://openscotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2008/04/04174031>

This historic programme to deliver targeted environmental, social, and economic benefits to Scotland's rural communities began in 2008. Rural Development Contracts – Rural Priorities (RDC – RP) is an integrated funding mechanism that contributes to the delivery of the Scottish Government's strategic objectives through regional priorities, agreed with stakeholders for each of the 11 regions. Rural Priorities is a competitive mechanism to ensure that contracts are awarded for the proposals which are best able to deliver the agreed regional priorities. Regional priorities have been established across the following five themes: business viability and competitiveness, water quality, adaptations to mitigate climate change, biodiversity and landscapes, and thriving rural communities.

United Kingdom: *Cream of the crop: Case studies in good practice in arts development in rural areas of the North West of England*

www.artscouncil.org.uk/regions/publication_detail.php?rid=5&sid=14&id=403

This report for the Arts Council of England presents case studies of nine arts organizations working within the rural sector in the North West region of England in terms of their practice

and contribution to rural social, economic, and cultural well-being. The case studies were chosen for their specific best practice impacts in the following areas: youth and good citizenship; education and training; economic development; arts and health; ICT development; community well-being; and informing policy and strategy. The report finds that distinct rural characteristics, some particular to the region, have had a bearing on cultural identity and on the ways artists and arts organizations have developed. Opportunities include cultural tourism development; retiring people moving to rural areas; developments in ICT for creative industries; arts helping regeneration processes; and the considerable social capital inherent in rural communities.

United Kingdom: Rural Arts Wiltshire

www.ruralartswiltshire.blogspot.com/

Rural Arts Wiltshire is the county's rural touring scheme, bringing up to 72 live performances and 20 participatory events to rural communities in Wiltshire every year.

United Kingdom: *Rural Virtues: Impact of arts touring in rural areas*

www.culturalpolicy.arts.gla.ac.uk/research/rural_project_outline.html

The Rural Virtues research project explores the extent and role of professional arts touring in rural areas. This exploration is undertaken with regard to three aspects: the impact of arts on the community in terms of social and cultural development, and its importance for personal development. This study is complemented by a second project report, *The Same, but Different: Rural Arts Touring in Scotland, the Case of Theatre*.

United Kingdom: *The same, but different: Rural arts touring in Scotland, the case of theatre*

www.culturalpolicy.arts.gla.ac.uk/research/rural_project_report.html

Researched and written by Christine Hamilton and Adrienne Scullion, this study was published by Comedia in 2004. The study comprises three parts:

1. The *Historical Review* concentrates on four or five companies serving as case examples. It delineates the touring pattern during the company's history observing changes from rural to urban touring or reverse, changes of locations, and repertoire. Its second focus relates to the experience of rural touring by company members. The historical review used archival materials, grey literature, and interviews partly in the manner of oral histories.
2. The *Policy and Funding Framework* part of the study deals with the attitudes and policies of the associated agencies (the local authorities, Scottish Arts Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Development Board) and aims to account for the range of provider-institutions (Highlands and Islands Arts and Dumfries and Galloway Arts Association). It comprises the review of relevant literature and interviews with policymakers and promoters in rural Scotland.
3. The *Case Studies*, undertaken in Dumfries and Galloway, assess the impact of rural arts touring on the communities through ethnographic fieldwork including theatre attendee focus groups, informal conversations with community members, attendance at meetings of relevant organizations, and general participant observation.

A2. CROSS-BORDER (INTERNATIONAL) PROJECTS

Connection Barents

www.labforculture.org/en/Case-studies/Contents/Projects/Database-of-Case-Studies/Connection-Barents

The Connection Barents project explores and interacts with the community of the Barents region and the various cultures there, forming new networks and relations between artists and experts working in different artistic fields and places. Using a laboratory and symposium housed in an abandoned industrial building, artists and local experts explore collaborative strategies and develop a proposal for museums of everyday life in the Barents. A special focus of discussion is the “border” role played by the city of Kirkenes.

Significant features

The project focuses on Kirkenes, a city in the northeast of Norway, close to the border with Finland and Russia. Situated between the East and the West, the city has been a war battlefield as well as a centre of trade and cultural exchange between Russia, Norway, Sweden, and Finland. Not only is it at the border of geographical Europe, it is also part of the so-called Schengen Border dividing EU from non-EU countries, and NATO from non-NATO members. Connecting Barents’ exploration of and interaction with the community and cultures of the Barents Region develops its research along five main areas: the liminal (in-between) zones, emerging economies, the Sami situation, nature and ecology, and border-crossing.

“The border”: Kirkenes

“Kirkenes [...] had changed from being the end of the line, into being a place for transition [...] from being militarised to civilised. From being nationalised into being an international place, regionalised and even globalised. From static to dynamic, from closed to open, from monocultural to multicultural, from masculine to feminine. Kirkenes has become a real bordertown, with trade and movement across the borders. Kirkenes has become a laboratory for a new time.” – Morken Strøksnes, 2003

Sixty different nationalities and ethnic groups live and work in Kirkenes. Two recent events have forced the town to rethink its identity: the fall of the Soviet Union (and the resulting “re-opening” of the Norwegian-Russian border) and the closing down of the mining company AS Sydvaranger, which had been the key element of the town since 1906. These two changes brought Kirkenes into a new era in which open borders meant the opening up of society.

Research areas

The liminal (in-between) zones: This area of research focused on the nomadic identities and sub-cultures of Kirkenes, including the refugees and Russian fishermen who reside in the city for months at a time, as well as gender subcultures and cultural minorities.

Emerging economies: The opening of the border to Russia and the closing of the mining company in the town led to the formation of new economic networks and new creativity in the city. The focus of this research area is to understand how local resources and wisdom are exploited, particularly in relation to tourism, industry, and new economic networks and potential.

The Sami situation: The Sami people are a cultural minority living in the Barents region: some of them help the Laboratory researchers to explore the potential, differences, and advantages of this culture in comparison with others of the area. The aim is to understand how specific traditional skills and knowledge are used and transformed in everyday life.

Nature and ecology: Due to the importance of hunting and fishing, nature is a vital element of the local way of life. The work of the Laboratory involves the exploration of natural resources and discussion of crucial ecological matters.

Border-crossing: This area of research involves contact between guards and workers at the physical border and the people who cross these borders daily. The border structures are power structures which reinforce the prevailing politics. The focus of the discussion is how workers and users negotiate these power structures.

Born in Europe

www.born-in-europe.de

Context and outline

The project Born in Europe set out to follow closely the growth of a European consciousness, revealing the historical dimensions while studying the development of differing and shared cultural identities. The project focuses on themes which are relevant for the future of Europe, and are already shaping it today, and presents them through exhibitions, conferences, and workshops, mostly coordinated by museums. A central aspect of Born in Europe is concerned with the lives of the people of Europe, their traditions, their roots, and their everyday existence. These need to be seen in the context of a growing need for a common European policy and new forms of democratic participation.

Today, a new generation of young Europeans is emerging who see their cultural identity in the context of the expanding European Union. Many children of immigrants were born in Europe, have grown up here, were educated and have learned about life here, and they intend to spend the rest of their lives in Europe. Do they see themselves as Europeans? What does Europe mean for today's young generation? It is becoming increasingly clear that multi-ethnic populations will have to define their relationship to Europe as a whole because its economic development and its responsibility for democracy and peace in the world will be decisive in shaping our common future.

The portraits of 25 migrant families with their newborn babies in Berlin, Gothenburg, Lisbon, Copenhagen, and Aarhus are presented in this exhibit. The photographers who participated documented the daily life of these young families from 20 different countries with the curators of the museums involved in the project. In addition to these portraits, a number of videos deal with the problem of the integration of families in the suburbs of big cities. In addition, a series of photographs entitled "The Doors of Europe" by a Spanish photographer shows the harsh reality of refugees trying to enter the fortress of Europe. A publication entitled *Born in Europe* (Neukölln Museum, Berlin 2003) also presents portraits of immigrant families. This 186-page book is published in German, English, Portuguese, Danish, and Swedish.

Cultures from around the block

www.labforculture.org/en/Case-studies/Contents/Projects/Database-of-Case-Studies/Cultures-From-Around-the-Block

www.mkc.cz/en/news-90/cultures-from-around-the-block.html

www.mkc.cz/en/events-648929/photography-exhibition.html

The project supports the exchange of information about intercultural neighbourhoods and the experience of grassroots organizations, using as examples seven intercultural neighbourhoods from Belgium, Czech Republic, Germany, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and the United Kingdom. Organized by the Multicultural Centre Prague, the initiative recognizes the important role dialogue can play in overcoming the problems that often persist in ethnically diverse towns. The project aims to bring together young people from different ethnic groups living in the same city. Through workshops, they document their surroundings via various mediums.

Hidden Spirits

www.labforculture.org/en/Case-studies/Contents/Projects/Case-Studies-Analytical-Approach/Hidden-Spirits

The aim of Hidden Spirits is to give a voice to and connect small villages (both within and beyond Europe) that usually remain unknown and isolated. The project has proven to be a source of inspiration leading to the exploration of many different ideas. The first project put remote communities into direct communication with the world by placing personal and collective memories on the web. In the setting of a small Bulgarian village, it brought together a multidisciplinary, international team with expertise in the areas of identity, memory, and digital culture.

Hidden Spirits combines old stories with innovative storytelling methodologies. It is a project in which participants can exchange roles and be simultaneously witnesses and players, and in which creativity is challenged by the ability to listen and understand. Hidden Spirit's driving force is the belief that focusing on forgotten personal stories that are waiting to be retold can form the basis for a new understanding of diversity.

Context and scenario

Bela Rechka is a small village in northwest Bulgaria with a population of less than a hundred people whose average age is between 70 and 75. Most of them live alone; the younger generations having moved to the cities or abroad.

Mbrestan, on the hillsides of southern Albania (Barat region), is another example of a remote place whose richness awaits fresh discovery. The nearest centre is roughly 10 km away. About 180 families live in Mbrestan, spread within the high valley.

Project description

A dozen professionals from different cultural, social, professional, and national backgrounds meet and spend two weeks in the chosen village, where they investigate, exchange, and create along with the local community. The stay in the village can be a relaxed, almost intimate experience. Contact with the locals – who generously share food and lodgings while following the work of the crew – extends beyond the collecting of stories. The members of the team share their professional and human know-how, skills, and technical equipment.

They use art, storytelling, and interactive narratives to collect interviews, sounds, and images. Presenting the results to the local community can have a strong impact: people see themselves and hear from each other as never before. The element of international participation can also have an uplifting effect on the village.

A key goal of Hidden Spirits is the publication and dissemination of the results to a wide audience. This would include many traditional media platforms (e.g., the Bela Rechka book is bilingual – in Bulgarian and English – and currently available in three European countries: Germany, Bulgaria and the Czech Republic) as well as innovative ones, such as interactive online and offline documentary that uses the D.A.D.A. e-publishing system or the Korsakowtool.

Laboratories of cross-cultural practices

www.interculturaldialogue.net

This project is a partnership between the Borderland Foundation in Poland, Laundry in the U.K., and the New Culture Foundation in Bulgaria. The work is structured around creative laboratories using artistic practice in diverse multicultural communities. Each project partner is conducting their own creative activities, primarily (though not exclusively) with young people, in their locality and in multicultural communities where the issues are matters of memory, destruction of cultural heritage and environment, social and ethnic conflict, immigration, and community building.

The website provides a snapshot of activity at any given point of the project, documenting elements of each partner's programme of work, points of debate, and reflections on experiences.

Living Heritage

www.labforculture.org/en/Case-studies/Contents/Projects/Case-Studies-Analytical-Approach/Living-Heritage

Living Heritage (2001-05) sought to improve local community development in South East Europe through the promotion of sustainable culture and heritage projects. It offered grants, training in capacity building skills, and technical assistance. Launched in Macedonia, Living Heritage operated in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, and Romania, supporting over 140 projects (covering such areas as oral and local history, folklore, museums and conservation, festivals, agriculture and the environment, contemporary art, and tourism). In 2004-05, the programme made a successful Culture 2000 bid.

Living Heritage adopts a specific approach to heritage and its interaction with local communities. Heritage is understood as a resource, a form of social capital which can contribute to the quality of life in local communities. Living Heritage was less a cultural programme than a community development scheme which used culture as a tool.

The idea of an initiative which would promote “community development through cultural resources” was originally raised within the King Baudouin Foundation as a potential successor to European Heritage Days, which the Foundation had been coordinating. Comprehensive research into community-based heritage was carried out, leading to a report that was submitted to the Council of Europe in 1999. The report concluded that the Council was not in a position to develop the concept further.

Since the Foundation was testing out some new approaches to heritage as part of its work in Eastern Europe, it decided to move independently towards full implementation of the initiative, partly with the aim of integrating two programmes that were already operational: one for young people at risk, another on inter-ethnic relations.

In each country, the programme was carried out through a partnership between the King Baudouin Foundation and a financial partner, such as the Soros Foundation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, and Macedonia, Romania's Carpathian Foundation, and the Romanian Environmental Partnership Foundation. Co-funders were in charge of selecting and contracting a local NGO for the programme's implementation and of designing the best strategy for implementation. In Macedonia and Romania the same organization was simultaneously the financial and operating partner.

The Living Heritage programme was initially designed to foster contacts and cooperation between different players within each country. Such links were seen as vital to help overcome the isolation that community and cultural operators often felt, and to encourage the sharing of experience and ideas.

An initial guideline for implementing the initiative was offered through the development of 10 principles for consideration in developing community-based heritage projects:

1. Demonstrate local benefit
2. Provide sustainable economic development
3. Support voluntary commitment
4. Adopt an incremental approach
5. Show flexibility and responsiveness
6. Make friends with the media
7. Offer leadership and clear vision
8. Provide accessible management
9. Demonstrate openness and honesty
10. Adopt a "Dig where you stand" approach

Heritage, memory, local population

www.labforculture.org/en/Case-studies/Contents/Projects/Database-of-Case-Studies/Heritage-Memory-Local-Population

This project (2004-06) was a collaboration of eight institutions to use historic monuments for contemporary artistic projects in a more socially effective way and share the results of their efforts with other professionals and the public. Partners conduct innovative pilot projects (pilot projects are described online) to better understand the context and meaning of sites and the link between local community and heritage. Exchange visits allow partners to compare methods and results. Individual experiences and general methods are disseminated via a multilingual, interactive database and documentation available on-site and online.

Significant features: The re-use of historic monuments for contemporary art projects, linking local context with cultural heritage.

Komunikacija (Communication)

www.labforculture.org/en/Case-studies/Contents/Projects/Case-Studies-Analytical-Approach/Komunikacija

A creative educational programme for young people in unstable regions of former Yugoslavia with unsolved ethnic problems, conceived to help in establishing a dialogue between the citizens of different national groups. The programme is conducted in various regions with groups of 20 young people of different nationalities. Photography is used during the process as a tool as one of the most objective art mediums for establishing communication. The photographs produced by young people on different subjects during the process of the workshops become a reference point for their mutual communication. During a period of 13 weeks, young people learn to observe the world, their lives, and the lives of others more openly and with less prejudice. The final products of the project are exhibitions in the cities where workshops were conducted as well as in the major cities of the region, and a publication with the photographs and statements of all participants.

Context and scenario

After the wars in the former Yugoslavia, there are still many unsolved problems and possible zones of conflict in the region. Before the civil war, Yugoslavia was famous for its multi-ethnic character and the fact that all these different nations and religions lived together in peace in the same territory. After the war, nationalities of the former country were divided and lived with growing prejudice and animosity towards each other. Despite democratic changes happening in all countries of the region, societies still remained closed and xenophobic. One of the big problems that is still waiting to be solved is the lack of capability to face war crimes of the past and establish genuine communication between different nationalities.

Project description

The Communication project started in 2005 in the South Serbia region with a group of 20 young Albanians, Serbs, and Roma of high school age. The idea was to create a group of young people to work together in an environment where they do not have much chance to meet and communicate, even though they live in the same city. In the first stage of the project, organizers decided to work in the city of Bujanovac, since the south of Serbia is still the most prone to future crises – not only because of its closeness to Kosovo, but also because of the extreme poverty in that part of the country. After the results from the first year of the project, Kiosk decided to continue working on the project in three more areas of the region. In 2006 workshops were held in South Serbia, Kosovo, Sandzak, and Vojvodina. Three more Belgrade-based artists were involved in the second year of the project as trainers. A total of 80 young people went through the process.

The major target group of the Communication project are young high school age children, the future decision-makers in the region. The organizer's feeling is that it is more than necessary for them to establish a dialogue with their peers of different nationalities and overcome the prejudice for the well-being of the future in the region. A secondary target group of the project is the local communities of the regions where workshops are held, since during the process of the workshops, families, friends, and neighbours of the participants are involved in the project as subjects of many photographs. Finally, a third target audience for the project is the wider public of the former Yugoslavia region, since exhibitions and promotions of the publication are public events with strong media coverage.

The project includes:

Preparation of the project: creation of partner organizations network, selection of the participants, training of the artists/ photographers.

Workshops: 13 workshops in each city, one workshop dedicated to the organized field trip. Participants are producing photos on 12 different subjects and these photographs serve as a base for their communication and exhibitions and promotional material; their discussions and workshop process are documented for the promotional materials of the project.

Preparation of the presentation of the project: editing of the photographic material produced in the workshops; scanning of the photographic material; graphic design of the publication; preparation of the texts for the publication; translating of all texts; work on the material for documentary video material; printing photographs for the exhibition; organizing exhibitions in all cities where workshops were conducted and the final exhibition in Belgrade.

The role of artists collaborating with Kiosk on the Communication project is to act as workshop coordinators. Local partner organizations are helping the organizer to select a group of workshop participants and to find a work place where the workshops are conducted. During the course of the workshops, they act as local group coordinators. In the promotional phase of the project, they help Kiosk to organize local exhibitions.

The most important aim and result of the project is enabling communication among young people of different nationalities and the promotion of multi-ethnic dialogue. Participants of the workshops are gaining basic knowledge of photography and photographic tradition as well as working methods in multi-ethnic workshops that they could use in similar projects in the future. They are trained to think critically and to take a more active role in the community. Since 2005, 100 young people from the region have been involved in the project. Three local non-governmental organizations worked with Kiosk on the project and gained the basic skills to conduct this specific kind of workshops. Three Belgrade-based artists were trained to conduct the workshops. The Communication project was presented at nine exhibitions in Serbia and abroad and in two publications. Media coverage of both years of the project was excellent so the project gained visibility and public recognition.

Kiosk is working on the fundraising for the third year of the project that will take place in South Serbia, Sandzak, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Croatia. In this phase of the project, a Regional Youth Action Platform will be created and it will gather participants of the project starting from 2005. In cooperation with local partners, Kiosk will try to provide participants with the basic facilities (such as working space, computers with internet access they could use, etc.) for their future involvement in the Platform. Also, Kiosk will create a Communication Web Platform so participants from different regions will be able to get in touch with each other, but also to show their work or share opinions with young people from around the world, since the project will be linked with the similar initiatives abroad. Kiosk will continue the practice of presenting the project at exhibitions, but it will also be possible for interested people to buy photographic works of the project's participants. By doing that, it will enable a fund for initiatives happening through the Youth Action Platform.

Cross-cultural cooperation is important for the more than the visible reason of rising xenophobia and national and religious animosities in today's society. Very often, art and culture are the only real grounds for dialogue, so in cases where any other dialogue does not

exist, it might be said that it is the responsibility of contemporary culture to enable it or initiate it if possible.

Meeting the other: Borders, identity and cultures on the European space – Project of Babelmed and partners

www.babelmed.net/index.php?c=3391&m=&k=&l=en

The project “Meeting the Other...” was conceived in July 2007 by Babelmed and eight European partners as an attempt to overcome negative prejudice about migrants and to deploy culture in asserting the valuable contribution of migration. The project covered several fields such as research, journalistic content, and creation. Its main objective was to highlight cultural and artistic expression inspired by migration, and to offer migrant creativity the space necessary for it to make its full contribution.

On October 20-21 in Barcelona, the project “Meeting the Other...” celebrated their closing event with a focus on cultural journalism. Artists, intellectuals, and journalists active in the project were invited to present and discuss the main results of the initiative. The event, organized by IeMed (the European Institute of the Mediterranean) and Babelmed also featured a presentation of the intercultural virtual festival at www.babelmedfestival.net, which offers a virtual space for artists with a creative and conceptual approach to immigration to share their content and get their voice heard.

Migrants: A model for successful integration

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/dialogue/catal_dial_en.pdf

Context

There is no agreement about the reasons for problems of integration and why they occur in some places and not in others. Some have argued that it is quantitative – that, for instance, when the percentage of immigrants in a country reaches a critical threshold, it becomes a destabilizing force. It may also depend on who the immigrants are and where they come from: if they are perceived as closely linked in some way to the receiving country, they may be more readily accepted. But are these links ethnic, religious, cultural, or historic? Some of the communities most closely linked by history and culture have found it hardest to integrate – Moroccans in Spain, Albanians in Greece, Algerians in France. In fact, geographical proximity might actually add to the tensions. With such uncertainty about the factors behind integration problems, this research project proposes a different approach in order to formulate steps for positive action.

Aims and focus

The project focuses on the legal, political, and educational challenges of integration in order to establish what frameworks and procedures are needed to assist the process. The approach is pragmatic, based on case studies of successful integration in the nine countries of the project partners. Each partner will submit an overview of migration in their country and a review of current public debates on integration and multiculturalism. Each will then research three case studies, one each in the fields of education, discrimination in the workplace, and voting rights and civic participation.

Each case study will be analyzed by the project team to determine in what ways it offers a distinctive model of integration and to establish the underlying values and processes on which

the model is based. All case studies will then be compared to identify key strands and models that can be applied across Europe.

TATAPUME – “Radiotherapy” about the history of migration in Europe

www.tatapume.org

Tatapume – “Let’s talk!” in Greek – is what people say when they part. It is the same as the French *au revoir*, the English *see you*, the German *Auf Wiedersehen*, or the Italian *arrivederci* – with one difference: instead of referring to seeing, as the others do, it refers to dialogue.

This is the perfect title to invite people to talk with the “Other.” It is not a matter of being politically correct, but because talking to a different person brings new opportunities. It may sometimes be difficult, but it will usually be rewarding. In the European year of intercultural dialogue, this project is trying to discover how far this readiness to talk to the Other is the true story of Europe. “Radiotherapy” against stereotypes!

Ten programmes about European history are being produced and broadcast by seven radio stations in seven European countries: Austria, France, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Slovenia, and Spain. The programmes are also available for free as Podcasts on the website www.tatapume.org, accompanied by bibliographies and full interviews with personalities from each country. They can be used as educational materials, presenting the topic from an original point of view, yet with a solid scientific background.

The other Europeans

www.the-other-europeans.eu/project.htm

The Other Europeans is a collaborative project of other music e.V. (Germany), the KlezMORE Festival Vienna (Austria), and the Jewish Culture Festival of Krakow (Poland). In 2008-09, all three festivals will present activities that explore the historical and contemporary relationships between Ashkenazic Jewish (Yiddish) and Roma cultures. The core activity is to create and present two new bands, one Yiddish and one Roma, made up of outstanding Yiddish and Roma musicians based in Europe. In 2008, each band will develop and perform separate repertoires with common Romanian roots, and in 2009 the two bands will collaborate to create a crossover repertoire and style. Complementing this process, the festivals will also present symposia, workshops on instrumental music, vocal music, dance and language, and a film series, all focused on an intercultural understanding of Yiddish and Roma cultures. (For a list of activities at each festival, visit the festival websites.)

A3. ARTISTIC RESIDENCES IN RURAL AREAS

Gulliver Connect programme – mobility and arts work placement programme

The main objective of this programme is to enable young arts practitioners from Central and Eastern Europe (including all South East Europe [SEE] countries as well as the former Soviet Union) to set up work placements in cultural organizations in the targeted region (other than the country of residence). By so doing, the individuals involved gain more international work experience and enlarge their networks. Placements of up to six weeks' duration are intended to be mutually beneficial for the visitor and the host organization. The programme was set up in 1997 and currently operates as a partnership between the Felix Meritis Foundation, KulturKontakt (Vienna), NCDO (Amsterdam), the New Theatre Institute of Latvia (Riga), the Open Society Institute (Budapest), the Red House (Sofia), and Theorem (Riga).

Italy: Fabrica

www.fabrica.it

www.fabrica.it/page.php?id=141

Benetton's research centre on communication offers scholarships for young artists under 25. Every year, young artists are invited from all over the world to live at the Fabrica centre in Italy, working and researching in diverse fields including photography, design, music, video, writing, interactive, and visual communication in general.

General expenses are covered by a grant that includes travel to and from your country; accommodation in Treviso (to share with one or two Fabrica grantholders); lunch from Monday to Friday; monthly living expenses; and health insurance for the entire duration of the contract.

Italy: UNIDEE in residence international programme

<http://unidee.cittadellarte.it>

An international residency programme for artists, curators, and managers of socio-cultural projects bridging art and society with the help of experts in various fields: artists, academia, entrepreneurs, and researchers. Particularly important to UNIDEE is the collective dimension – direct and constant engagement between residents, collaboration on projects, or simply casual encounters that are decisive for experimentation in communal projects.

Although there are different organizations providing grants to cover the costs of participation, UNIDEE has adjusted its fees in accordance with the diverse economies of each country. It is organized by Cittadellarte – Fondazione Pistoletto.

A3. ONLINE DATABASES OF CASE STUDIES

Arts Council England, The Arts in Rural England: Database of projects
www.artscouncil.org.uk/regions/project_detail.php?rid=4&sid=6&id=377

European Cultural Foundation: Database of Granted projects (2007-08)
www.eurocult.org/uploads/docs/1038.pdf
www.eurocult.org/uploads/docs/763.pdf

IFACCA research
www.ifacca.org/media/files/CulturalDevelopmentRuralRemote.pdf

Intercultural Dialogue: Best Practices at Community Level
http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/dialogue/catal_dial_en.pdf

Intercultural Map, Database of Projects
www.interculturemap.org/EN/search.php

Kulturkontakt: Database of Projects and Partners in Central and Eastern Europe
www.kulturkontakt.or.at/page.aspx?target=230535&l=2

LabforCulture: Case studies section
www.labforculture.org/en/Case-studies

Swiss Cultural Program for the Western Balkans, projects section
www.phbelgrade.org/e_projects.htm

Annex B.

Key networks and organizations

Banlieues d'Europe

www.banlieues-europe.com/

Founded in 1992, this is a network of municipal officials, town planners, experts and researchers, cultural workers, and artists who have experience in the creation of artistic interventions targeted for, and in collaboration with, underprivileged neighbourhoods and individuals.

Budapest Observatory

www.budobs.org

The observatory is of help for those who want to know more about the conditions (finances, legislation, governance, policies) of cultural life (cultural activities, products, and organizations) in east-central European countries.

Clubture, Croatia

A network connecting independent cultural organizations in Croatia and South East Europe in the fields of contemporary art and urban culture. It provides a regional platform for active cooperation and exchange of programmes between independent initiatives from Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia, Montenegro, and Macedonia.

Charter of European Rural Communities

<http://europeancharter.eu>

Since 1989 small rural communities, one from each of the countries of the European Union, share a bond of friendship which is registered in the “Charter of European Rural Communities.” There is one rural community represented in the Charter from every member state of the European Union.

Chitalishte Portal

www.chitalishte.bg/index.php?set_language=2

Council for European Urbanism

www.ceunet.org

Dedicated to the well-being of present and future generations through the advancement of humane cities, towns, villages, and countryside in Europe. Guiding ideas: cities, towns, and villages should have mixed uses and social diversity; make efficient and sustainable use of buildings, land, and other resources; be safe and accessible by foot, bicycle, car, and public transport; have clearly defined boundaries at all stages of development; have streets and spaces formed by an architecture that respects local history, climate, landscape, and geography; and have a variety that allows for the evolution of society, function, and design.

Creative Rural Communities

www.inspiringthevale.com/

Creative Rural Communities is a new regeneration and economic development initiative led by the Vale of Glamorgan Council in partnership with various public, private, and voluntary sector organizations. The aim of the initiative is to give the people of the rural Vale the power to control the future of their communities. Funding is enabling the partnership to help individuals, groups, and communities throughout the rural Vale. Creative Rural Communities will provide vital support for a wide range of potential projects that will benefit those communities both now and in the future.

It is hoped that the initiative will capture the imagination of the people of the rural Vale and, through sharing work, goals, and ultimately rewards, individuals can transform into proactive groups and make a real difference to the day-to-day lives of their communities.

Culture and Rural Development in East Midlands

<http://ruralculture-em.org/cgi-bin/cemr.cgi>

Culture East Midlands in England supports the region's culture in urban and rural areas. This site is a new service providing information about cultural projects and organizations in rural parts of the East Midlands. It focuses particularly on the arts, museums, libraries, and heritage in the public and voluntary sectors.

East Midlands Arts in Rural Areas Network

<http://ruralculture-em.org/site/list/culture/emaran>

A regional voluntary network established in autumn 2006 with the aim of supporting arts in rural areas and rural regeneration through the arts. The mission is to create opportunities for artists, creative practitioners, creative industries, and cultural organizations in the rural East Midlands to meet, build relationships, and share experience and knowledge. The network also acts as an advocate for rural culture. This work embraces the voluntary, community, and statutory sectors. It aims to make connections and create partnerships working with other sectors of relevance to rural culture such as rural regeneration, tourism, and economic development.

Economic Reconstruction and Development in South-East Europe

www.seerecon.org/

The Joint Office for South East Europe was set up in 1999 to support the European Commission and World Bank in their joint role as coordinators of international assistance for the reconstruction and development of South East Europe (SEE). The work of the office is underpinned by three core interrelated functions:

- Facilitating European Commission / World Bank / donor cooperation;
- Aid mobilization and monitoring aid flows to South East Europe; and
- Communicating and transferring knowledge and information to both the international community and the countries of the region.

European Association of Events Centres

www.evvc.org/

An umbrella organization of venues and event centres, with around 300 members, mostly in Germany and adjoining European countries. It is Europe's most important representative of such arena.

European Association of Historic Towns and Regions

www.historic-towns.org/

Formed by the Council of Europe in 1999, it aims to promote the interests of historic and heritage towns across Europe. EAHTR's main objective is to share experiences on the sustainable urban conservation and management of historic areas through international collaboration between towns and cities and other involved organizations.

European Festivals Association

www.efa-aeu.eu

An organization representing more than 100 quality festivals and 11 national festivals associations in 38 European and non-European countries.

European Network for Rural Development (recently launched – October 2008)

The Network will bring together policymakers, administrators, academics, and other key actors in the area of rural development from across the European Union, thus making it easier for them to share ideas, information, and experience. This will help keep the European Union's rural development policy fit for the demands of the twenty-first century.

European Network of Cultural Centers

www.encc.eu

ENCC is an international network of arts and cultural centres, founded in 1994. It provides a platform for the exchange of experiences in the running, programming, audience development, infrastructure, and architecture of multidisciplinary cultural centres.

International Festivals and Events Association Europe

www.ifeaeurope.com/

An association which brings together those active in the cultural festival and event sector in order to share ideas and best practices. It facilitates development in the sector and promotes networking and international exchange.

Littoral Arts Trust, UK

www.littoral.org.uk

A non-profit arts trust which promotes new creative partnerships, critical art practices, and cultural strategies in response to issues about social, environmental, and economic change.

National Rural Touring Forum (NRTF), UK

www.nrtf.org.uk/

Represents a number of mainly rural touring schemes and rural arts development agencies, principally across England, that aim to help local people to promote high quality arts events and experiences in rural and other community venues. The NRTF currently comprises of about 40 full touring scheme members and 13 associate members. The NRTF organizes annual conferences, produces generic marketing and publicity, and provides a program of training, advocacy, research, advice, and information.

Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA)

www.idea.gov.uk

IDeA works for local government improvement so councils can serve people and places better. The Leadership Academy programmes help councillors become better leaders so they can balance the diverse demands of people living in the same community. Working with national, regional, and local partners, IDeA helps councils work through local partnerships to tackle local priorities such as health, children's services, and promoting economic prosperity. The Agency also promotes the development of local government's workforce. IDeA is owned by the Local Government Association and belongs to local government.

Network of European Cultural Capitals and Months

www.eccm-cultural-capitals.org/Description.html

This network is regrouping representatives of the past and future Cultural Capitals and Months of Europe and contributes in the monitoring, coordinating, and evaluating efforts of this important European project in the cultural field. ECCM was founded in 1996 by the organizers of the 10 first Cultural Capitals as a non-profit organization.

PREPARE network (Pre-accession partnership for rural Europe)

www.preparenetwork.org/

The aim of the PREPARE Network is to promote multi-national exchange between those who are involved (as individuals or organizations) in rural development anywhere in Europe. It is an open network of individuals, multi-polar in nature, controlled by its membership, and flexible in operation. For the time being, there is no subscription fee, unless the members later decide that there should be. Organizations, including those on the PREPARE Organising Group, are not formal members: they are represented by individuals, on equal terms to all other members. The network is conceived as a meeting point for people who work in the public, voluntary, or private sectors.

Rural Cultural Forum, UK

www.littoral.org.uk/HTML01/

Supported by Arts Council England, West Midlands, and the Littoral Arts Trust, the Forum aims:

- To provide a platform and cultural agency for the rural community through which to promote and sustain its identity and rich creative, social, and artistic traditions of rural and farming communities.

- To provide a platform for grassroots rural and farming community constituencies and other rural support agencies to meet together and discuss and formulate a coherent cultural investment and arts strategy for the rural and agricultural sectors.
- To work to create new rural economic and employment opportunities, promoting creative rural industries, rural crafts, new rural media, ICT and communications technologies, rural tourism and food marketing initiatives, and arts-based rural social and economic inclusion and rural regeneration initiatives.

Rural Europe

www.ruraleurope.info/

Overall objectives of the project are:

- To promote dialogue between Turkish Universities and their EU counterparts on Research Methodologies and Approaches, as well as between Rural Communities on the EU Rural Policy (Agricultural and Regional Policies);
- To encourage exchange of knowledge and best practices on implementation of EU Rural Policy (Agricultural and Regional Policies) at Community-level;
- To ensure better knowledge and understanding of Rural Communities in Turkey within 2 EU Member States (France and Netherlands);
- Increasing the awareness of the opportunities and challenges of future enlargement in Turkey especially concerning Rural Policy (Agricultural and Regional Policies);
- To ensure a better knowledge and understanding of Rural communities in 2 Member States (France and Netherlands) within Turkey;
- To promote gender equality and equal opportunities, environment preservation and sustainable development at Community-level.

The project is co-financed by the European Union in Promotion of Civil Society Dialogue Between EU and Turkey Project. The Bilkent University Department of Communication and Design administrates the project.

Trans Europa Halles

www.teh.net/

Founded in 1983, Trans Europe Halles is a network of independent culture centres. The network is characterized by its use of recycled buildings, its support for new talent, and its commitment to international cultural exchange.

Trans-European Rural Network

www.eurosur.org/tern/

A coalition of grassroots initiatives based in rural areas throughout Europe. TERN was set up following the second European Commission programme to combat poverty and responded to a need to facilitate contacts between groups based in marginalized rural zones. TERN draws its membership from a broad range of socio-economic and cultural initiatives in rural areas.

Annex C.

Foundations and funding bodies

Allianz Cultural Foundation, Germany

www.allianz-kulturstiftung.de

The Allianz Cultural Foundation addresses exceptionally gifted young people from all sectors of art, culture, and education. Support is given primarily to multinational and intercultural cooperation projects which promote the European integration process and have a lasting impact. The main sponsorship is of contemporary cross-genre or cross-media concepts and initiatives. At the same time, the Foundation places special emphasis on promoting projects that are innovative in content or method and are alive to new trends in art, culture, and education. The Foundation promotes cooperation projects right across Europe, and is also engaged at local and regional levels in Germany, in the following fields: music, theatre/opera/dance, fine arts, film, architecture/urban planning, and education/science.

Balkankult Foundation

www.balkankult.org

The foundation links together artists and institutions, and connects cultures and peoples. Founded in 1999 in Sarajevo, it is the first regional cultural foundation in the Balkans. Its main goals and instruments are:

- Encourage the mobility of artists, cultural practitioners, ideas, and expertise
- Research and publishing activities
- Organization of expert meetings, lectures, seminars, discussions, and visits as well as cultural and economic events
- Promotion of international cultural cooperation
- Development of cultural diversity

Chitalishte Development Foundation, Bulgaria

www.chitalishte.bg

A non-profit organization continuing the efforts of project “Community Development and Participation through the Chitalishte Network” (2001-04), a joint project of the Ministry of Culture of R Bulgaria and the United Nations Development Programme, and financially supported by the United States Agency for International Development and the “Matra” programme of the Government of the Netherlands. The long-term goal of the Foundation is to strengthen the role of the Bulgarian Chitalishta as community-based centres and valuable participants in the local development. Its strategy concept is in line with the national policy concerning the Chitalishte sector based on the principles of decentralization, preservation of traditions, building of civil society, and affiliation of its communities to modern-world values.

Evens Foundation, Antwerp, Belgium

www.evensfoundation.be

Operating since 1996, the Evens Foundation aims to “promote ‘tools’ in all disciplines that improve the dialogue between human beings, combat any form of discrimination, detect potential conflicts, try to intervene in a courageous way and develop the sense of responsibility, both individually and collectively.” It does so by supporting and developing projects likely to have a long-lasting influence on European integration. The Foundation focuses its activities on two main fields: intercultural education (understood in a broad sense as active learning to deal with racism, and social and cultural diversity) and the arts. It is also active in the fields of literature and science. In the field of art, the Evens Foundation supports contemporary artistic projects that serve as a lever to make the social tissue more dynamic, offering theoreticians and artists a platform to reflect on the vision of art in our society; it also organizes conferences and research on the integration of art in civil society.

Joseph Rowntree Foundation, UK

www.jrf.org.uk

The Foundation aims to contribute to the building and development of strong, cohesive, and sustainable communities. Its objectives are:

- to help improve the quality of life in disadvantaged neighbourhoods;
- to understand the changes taking place in communities and neighbourhoods;
- to develop the economic, social, and environmental sustainability of homes; and
- to improve access to affordable homes for people on low incomes.

Mihai Eminescu Trust, United Kingdom. Relevance: Romania

www.mihaieminescutrust.org

A U.K.-registered charity, established in 1987, that is dedicated to the conservation and regeneration of villages and communes in Transylvania and the Maramureş regions of Romania (it is also involved in several urban projects in the country). While U.K.-based, it also has an office in Romania. The work of MET consists especially in establishing cooperation programmes by providing expertise in conservation and restoration through the direct involvement of British professionals in local projects and also in trainings held by these experts at various sites in MET’s working regions. MET offers consultancy and non-reimbursable grants and loans to local farmers and craftsmen in order to extend their own businesses. It also works in collaboration with other Romanian and German partners (given its interest in the Saxon villages of Transylvania).

Pro Patrimonio Foundation, United Kingdom, Romania, France, and USA

Relevance: Romania

www.propatrimonio.org

Pro Patrimonio, “The National Trust of Romania,” is an international federation of independent, autonomous, non-profit foundations whose mission is to identify, preserve, and lobby for the historic heritage of Romania. It pursues this mission by restoring, rescuing, and revitalizing endangered buildings and sites throughout the country, with a focus on reviving ancient crafts and skills and stimulating local economy development. Launched in London in

2000, Pro Patrimonio Foundations are now established in Bucharest, Câmpulung, Braşov (in Romania), London, Paris, and New York. Each Foundation is funded by membership subscription and by private and corporate donations (including the transfer of real estate) to each of its branches. Pro Patrimonio takes care of the acquisition, restoration, and public opening of a limited number of buildings and sites of exceptional quality which are representative of Romania's diversity of styles and cultures. It also provides information, assistance, and support for restoration works in other important heritage sites, including in rural areas.

Robert Bosch Foundation, Germany

www.bosch-stiftung.de

Established in 1964, the Robert Bosch Foundation is one of the major German foundations associated with a private company. Arts and culture, education, and humanities are among the objectives described in its charter. Starting three decades ago from an initial focus on developing German-Polish relations, the Foundation now undertakes cooperation programmes with Central and Eastern Europe on a regular basis. These include: Robert Bosch Managers of Cultural Promotion in/from CEE; Cooperation in the Arts, promoting cooperation between young German and CEE artists; Programme for Translators from Germany and CEE; and Literature in an Intercultural Context – the Adelbert von Chamisso Literature Award.

Roberto Cimetta Fund, Paris, France

www.cimettafund.org

The Roberto Cimetta Fund is an international association promoting artistic exchange and the mobility of professionals in the field of contemporary performing arts and visual arts within the Mediterranean area. In collaboration with the European Cultural Foundation, the Roberto Cimetta Fund has set up a programme for awarding individual travel grants. The mobility programme supports travel which is linked to exchange and to forthcoming projects and covers travel and visa costs for trips such as attending professional cultural network meetings, workshops, artist's residences, festivals, symposiums, etc. It is open to all professional artists, cultural operators, or technicians working in the fields of contemporary performing arts, visual arts, or cinema in the Mediterranean (the countries on the north shore from Portugal to Turkey, including SEE Adriatic countries, and on the south side from the Near East to the Maghreb).

The Environmental Partnership. Relevance: Bulgaria and Romania

www.environmentalpartnership.org

This consortium of six foundations in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia focuses on mobilizing and empowering the people of the region to improve their environment, their local communities, and their societies. Within the environmental focus, projects that have a cultural component have also been supported (such as the Living Heritage project, initiated by the King Baudouin Foundation, referred to previously). The Environmental Partnership was established in 1991 by philanthropic funders, including the German Marshall Fund of the United States, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, and the Sasakawa Peace Foundation. Since then, a growing number of partners, including governments, private foundations, and an increasing number of companies and corporations, have joined the Environmental Partnership. It is at

present the most significant private source of funding for community-based environmental initiatives in the region. The member foundations in SEE are:

- **Bulgarian Environmental Partnership Foundation:** www.bepf-bg.org
- **Environmental Partnership Foundation Romania:** www.epce.ro

The King Baudouin Foundation, Brussels, Belgium

www.kbs-frb.be

An independent public benefit foundation which works to improve people's living conditions. It runs programmes in a variety of areas, with a Belgian or international focus, and has a series of specific projects targeting the countries of SEE. The latter are set up with local partners and deal with such issues as minority rights, ethnic relations, and young people at risk. Since 2001, the Foundation has also developed a programme in the field of cultural heritage.

Trust for Civil Society in Central and Eastern Europe

www.ceetrust.org

Launched in 2001, as an independent organization with endowment support from a group of private grant-making foundations, the Trust promotes the development and long-term stabilization of civil societies in Central and Eastern European countries by providing urgently needed funding to help NGOs gain greater self-reliance and self-sufficiency. The CEE Trust makes long-term grants to indigenous non-profit organizations in the seven target countries (relevant to this survey: Bulgaria and Romania). These enable the partner organizations to develop and implement their own strategic programmes addressing the three broad CEE Trust objectives.

Annex D.

Events and conference reports

Distant Voices. Migrant Workers, Representation and the Arts, 17 October 2007, Guildhall Arts Centre, Grantham

http://ruralculture-em.org/resources/publications/Distant_Voices_Seminar_Report_web.pdf

Best practices at Community level, Intercultural Dialogue conference and exhibition, 22-23 November 2006, Headquarters of The Committee of the Regions – Brussels

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/dialogue/index_en.html

Creative Rural Industries: Arts and Rural Regeneration Conference, May 2006, LITTORAL Arts and the Rural Cultural Forum, East Lancashire, United Kingdom

www.littoral.org.uk

Arts and Rural Regeneration Conference, April 2005, Somerset, United Kingdom

www.somersetarts-events.co.uk/ArtsConferenceReport.doc

National Rural Touring Forum Conference, July 2005, Warwickshire, United Kingdom

www.nrtf.org.uk

New Fields: Arts and Agriculture, July 2005, Leeds, United Kingdom

Rural Design Forum, June 2005, Yorkshire, United Kingdom

Heritage-Led Regeneration: Delivering Good Practice, 15-16 September, 2005. Goteborg, Sweden

www.historic-towns.org/documents/downloads/inheritsept2005.pdf

Arts and Market Towns Conference, October 2003, Whitby, Yorkshire, United Kingdom

www.art-connections.org.uk/arts_market_towns.cfm

On The Edge: Culture and the Arts in Remote and Rural Locations, 2001, Scotland, United Kingdom

Lidia Varbanova, PhD

Lidia Varbanova has almost twenty years of professional experience in the management, leadership, advancement and research of national and international cultural policy and cultural development programs, capacity building for artistic organizations, project management and international artistic cooperation in Canada, Europe, Asia and the U.S. She consults on complex international projects in strategic planning, artistic networking, innovative marketing and fundraising, international cultural cooperation and partnership building. Lidia is a member of the Alumni Society of Salzburg Global Seminar; the International Remarque Forum Network and Arts Consultants Canada, and former Vice President of the European Network of Cultural Administration Training Centers ENCATC. Among the major awards and fellowships she has received are: FULBRIGHT fellowship in Cultural Economics; Fellowship Grant from the Japan Foundation; RSS-OSI grant; NISPAcee Fellowship; Project Grant from the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO); ARTSLINK fellowship at UCLA, California; and Scholarship from the Webb Memorial Trust at Ruskin College, Oxford. Currently, Lidia works as a senior consultant with the Musagetes Foundations, Canada; the European Cultural Foundation, Amsterdam; and the Soros Foundation (the Open Society Institute).