Transformative Action on Arts Education: Re-invigorating the Seoul Agenda

A Position Paper

Prepared for

The Canadian Commission for UNESCO
The Canadian Network for Arts and Learning
The UNESCO Chair in Arts and Learning, Queen's University

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Executive Summary

Arts education holds enormous potential to benefit learners and the communities in which they live. Realizing this potential is a global concern requiring the collaboration of many stakeholders. The Canadian Commission for UNESCO (CCUNESCO), the Canadian Network for Arts and Learning (CNAL), and the UNESCO Chair in Arts and Learning at Queen's University have come together to initiate change within the Canadian context and to inspire international partners to do the same.

A UNESCO World Conference held in Lisbon in 2006, identified arts education as a key component of human culture and development, highlighting its capacity to enlighten, fulfill, empower and sustain individuals and communities in every part of the world. A second World Conference convened in Seoul in 2010 produced the *Seoul Agenda: Goals for the development of arts education* with the intention of turning these principles into action.

While some progress has been made in implementing the strategies of the *Seoul Agenda*, much of the potential of arts education to promote peace, global citizenship, cultural diversity and sustainability remains unrealized, despite clear evidence that the world has never been in greater need of support in all these areas.

The partnership of CCUNESCO, CNAL, and the UNESCO Chair offers this position paper as a first step in the process of re-invigorating the *Seoul Agenda*. It proposes an approach to developing strategies that can be adapted within diverse contexts. This involves:

- Identifying priority areas of the *Seoul Agenda* by assessing local contexts;

- Building partnerships with influential leaders and identifying potential knowledge brokers;

- Choosing appropriate and manageable strategies for:

  a. Translating knowledge to community stakeholders;

  b. Building their capacity to implement change;

  c. Reinforcing and monitoring implementation efforts, and;

  d. Monitoring change and impact.

Project partners will initiate change within their own contexts using the proposed strategies and model examples and will encourage others to make a similar commitment.

Introduction

The arts play a vital role in contemporary learning by promoting creative capacity while offering alternative ways of accessing knowledge, stimulating individual growth, and impacting community development. The arts in education are continuously expanding to include emerging forms of expression and representation alongside more traditional forms, enhancing their capacity to communicate information, inspire new ideas, build bridges between cultures, and maintain engagement among diverse 21st century learners.

UNESCO Member States recognized the transformative potential of arts education in 2011 by unanimously endorsing the *Seoul Agenda: Goals for the development of arts education,*[1] a global plan that calls on governments and communities worldwide to increase access to arts education, improve the quality of arts education, and apply arts education to solving the world's social and cultural challenges. A major outcome of the second World Conference on Arts Education (Seoul, 2010), this document integrates concepts articulated in the *UNESCO Road Map for Arts Education*[2] produced by the first World Conference on Arts Education (Lisbon, 2006). Notwithstanding UNESCO's longstanding recognition of the power of arts education to advance its priorities, the goals of the *Seoul Agenda* today remain unrealized in many cases and unevenly implemented in others.

"That's what's great about the arts, it helps us celebrate what it really means to be alive."*

Marginal quotations are from the Eduarts Hub consultation held in Regina, Saskatchewan, March 2017.

Today, more than ever, the *Seoul Agenda* speaks to pressing social and cultural issues. In the face of a migration crisis affecting many parts of the world, along with an attendant rise in xenophobia, racism, religious intolerance, and violence against minority communities, the application of pedagogies, such as the arts in education, which have demonstrated a capacity to foster intercultural understanding, is of paramount importance. In Canada, responding to what it classifies as the "cultural genocide"[3] of Aboriginal peoples, the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission has issued 94 calls to action. Among these, it recommends, "Building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect."[4] The potential of arts education to promote cultural diversity and to motivate learners can no longer be neglected.

At the same time, climate change threatens more than social and cultural well-being. It also poses serious risk to health, food security, water ecosystems, rural and urban livelihoods, and infrastructure.[5] Arts education is an essential tool to promote environmental sustainability and awareness. Now is the time to apply arts education to renew teaching and learning, to support personal well-being, to foster social coherence, to engage learners in environmental issues, and to enhance the innovative capacity of society.

The Canadian Commission for UNESCO, the Canadian Network for Arts and Learning, and the UNESCO chair for Arts and Learning at Queen's University (Canada) have formed a partnership to respond to this urgent situation. Together, they are committed to leading an initiative to re-invigorate the *Seoul Agenda*. As a first step in the process of reengaging the world in arts and learning, they have undertaken the preparation of a position paper.

This document will make the case for the importance of arts education as a key component of human culture, education, and sustainable development. It will discuss the gap between the aspirations of the *Seoul Agenda* and their current implementation, and will propose strategies for partners and other parties tasked with achieving its goals. The paper aims to help national, regional and international stakeholders think through their own circumstances and initiate change, with the ultimate goal of improving the quality, accessibility, and implementation of arts education across Canada and worldwide.

The Potential of Arts Education

The arts are universal in their ability to enrich, empower, and sustain the lives of individuals and communities. Although there exists a wealth of evidence that connects participation in the arts with increased school achievement and motivation,[6] it is our position that the arts go beyond their role as catalyst to school success. People of all ages and backgrounds benefit from involvement in the arts and deserve equal access to artistic learning opportunities. With so many new technologies and ways of connecting being developed, there is no reason why arts education should remain inaccessible in the 21st century. As we move forward with the aims and strategies of the *Seoul Agenda*, we urge governments and policy makers to consider the potential of arts education in all its forms and for all people in terms of personal well-being, sustainability, and social change.

We understand arts education as an aspect of cultural education involving all new and traditional art forms in which learners engage in art-making, reflect on and appreciate artworks, and gain a historical and contextual perspective on the role of the arts. Learning occurs in formal (e.g., structured learning in schools), non-formal (e.g., structured out-of-school learning), and informal (e.g., family-, social-, or self-directed learning) settings.[7]
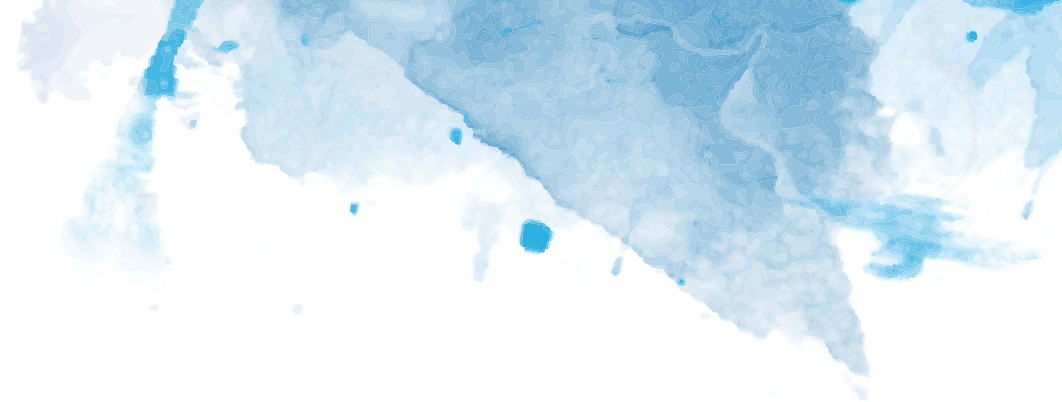
"The arts have tremendous potential for opening up conversations."

Arts Education for Personal Well-Being

Art-making is intrinsic to human nature and essential to "the well-rounded development of the whole human being."[8] Young children are prime exhibitors of this innate quality, as they freely and spontaneously engage in mark-making, role play, storytelling, singing, and dance-like movement, often without any incentive from adults. Aside from the pure joy such activities bring to children's lives, they also learn to negotiate complex meanings and make sense of the world through playful art experiences.[9] Throughout later childhood and into adolescence, the arts provide scaffolding for the construction of identity and civic responsibility. For instance, hip hop music and culture has emerged as a pivotal arena within arts programming for youth to

"explore and negotiate different roles and identities,"[10] as well as develop resilience, leadership, and community engagement.[11] There are also many advantages of intergenerational arts programing, namely the *transformative learning* (i.e., reinterpreting and understanding past experiences from multiple perspectives) that occurs when youth and older adults use the arts as a springboard for reciprocal learning.[12]

In addition to an enduring engagement in community music, amateur theatre, dance, and visual arts programs, the recent surge in popularity of activities such as knitting, colouring, and do-it-yourself projects show that adults are increasingly seeking out opportunities or "entry points" into the arts,

"It's valuable for students to see that people continue to do art as they grow older."

often as a way to escape the multitude of everyday life stressors.[13] This comes as no surprise since the arts have continuously been recognized—particularly within the field of art therapy—for their capacity to heal the soul and stabilize the mind.[14] For example, art therapies employed within correctional facilities have been shown to help inmates gain transformational insight into their life situations,[15] which can in turn promote positive life changes and perceptions of self-worth.

Creativity plays a critical role in economic stability and success as corporations aim to keep up with advancing technologies, approaches, and ways of thinking. As a result, individuals in the workforce must possess the capacity to adapt to new situations and think outside the box. Through the arts, learners of all ages can develop the creative skills needed to thrive in contemporary workplaces.[16] In a study of adult learners in Australia who participated in arts-based workshops to develop work-related skills, participants reported that engaging in performance and visual arts led to more openness, self-confidence, motivation, risk-taking, and understanding of effective communication.[17]

In short, learning in and through the arts is necessary if we aim to provide holistic and lifelong educational opportunities for diverse individuals.

Arts Education for Sustainability

Art education for sustainable development (AESD) is "part of an existing desire...to see art and visual culture education as a driver of reflexive and transformative thinking"[18] in an age where cultural, economic, and environmental landscapes are constantly changing and in crisis. As the theme to celebrate the 2016 UNESCO International Arts Education Week, AESD was recognized by the international community for its contribution to local and global awareness of these concerns. Sustainable environmental education through the arts can encourage learners to empathize with and appreciate the needs of their natural surroundings, promoting the lifelong pro-environment behaviours needed to sustain our natural world.[19] Empathy of

this kind is needed now more than ever in the face of climate change.[20]

Another concern is the eradication of individual cultures and local economies in favour of a larger global socio-economic network. In response to these circumstances within northern contexts, education and research institutes across the global North focus on the arts as a way to connect people to place, culture, and community; and to envision a future where the needs of individual cultures inform the products, services, and overall economic development in northern regions.[21] The arts have similarly been used in cities to address the rapid transformation of the urban landscape and what it means to live in a community of constant change.

Examples

In Singapore, an interactive theatre project entitled *IgnorLAND* invited residents to tour areas of the city and experience "reenactments and storytelling by actors...alongside tales told by local residents [to] give a sense...of the location's shifting identity and community."[22] The arts engage learning audiences in a form of "empathetic participation"[23] that is necessary to understand the issues we face together as inhabitants of this earth, and provide a creative space in which we can begin to address those issues in sustainable ways.

The Toronto-based not-for-profit organization, *Artscape*, works with a variety of stakeholders within communities to fund and create spaces of artistic engagement, ranging from artist live/work studios to galleries, non-profit offices, and cultural hubs, among others. Their "multi-stakeholder approach" allows for projects that "support community and economic development and serve as the social heart of the neighbourhood".[24] All their projects are designed to be environmentally and economically sustainable.

Green Thumb Theatre in Vancouver has engaged young people in discussions around sustainable development. One of its current productions, *Land of Trash*, presents students in grades 2 through 7 with a futuristic vision of a world suffering the long term effects of environmental abuse. An accompanying study guide provides teachers with activities and discussion topics to help students discover ways of preserving their environment.[25]
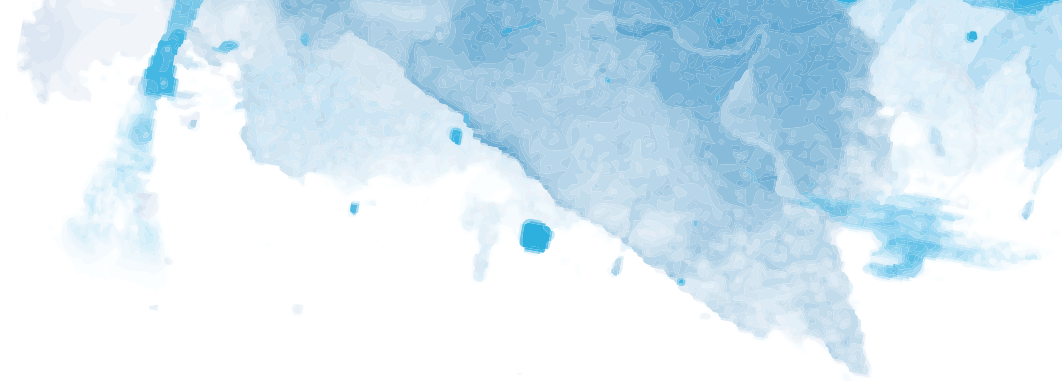
Arts Education for Social Change

Civil disturbance and unrest are global realities that necessitate constructive action. Paolo Freire argued that education is vital in developing the *critical consciousness* needed to take action against oppressive structures.[26] By providing meaningful aesthetic experiences, arts education can illuminate unjust circumstances, empower populations, and inspire change. Educator and social activist Maxine Greene often spoke of the awakening possibilities of the arts: "Most significant... is the capacity of an art form (when attentively perceived, when authentically imagined) to overcome passivity, to awaken us to a world in need of transformation, forever incomplete."[27] Arts education can be leveraged to raise awareness, challenge unresponsive political structures, empower and improve the life situations of at-risk youth, facilitate intercultural dialogue, and break down social norms around disabilities. In Canada, the Michaëlle Jean Foundation helps fund youth-driven, community initiatives using arts for social change.[28]

Examples

In San Francisco's Mission District, local artists and community members are empowered through the *Clarion Alley Mural Project* (CAMP), which uses "public art as a force for those who are marginalized."[29] Their various outreach projects raise awareness and engage the public in conversations around the issues of privilege, gentrification, and consumerism, among others.

In Venezuela, José Antonio Abreu started a classical music program called *El Sistema*, for underprivileged youth. It has since expanded to serve over 400 000 children in several countries, becoming "a worldwide movement for social change through art".[33] As one of the many subsidiaries of *Sistema Canada*, *Sistema Kingston* provides at-risk youth with free after school music programming with the aim of developing creativity, teamwork, persistence, and individual responsibility.[34]

In Orissa Province in India, Natya Chetana, a people's theatre collective, brings lively and engaging performances, by bicycle, to engage poor communities in conversation about such social issues as family violence, deforestation and urban migration.[32]

Across regions in Canada, the non-profit organization En Masse Pour Les Masses (all together for the masses) offers mural-making workshops in French and English to strengthen and give voice to communities through large-scale collective art production.[30][31]

In 2015, an innovative arts concentration program, *Mikw Chiyâm*, was initiated in select high schools within the Cree School Board in Eeyou Istchee (traditional Cree territory in northern Quebec) aimed at improving school retention and reinforcing students' Cree identity and culture. Students work closely alongside professional artists to develop individual and collaborative works, culminating in end-of-term art shows and a year-end arts festival.[36]

As part of an arts program in the UK, a wheelchair-bound college student challenged perceptions of the disabled body through an evolving series of self-portraits depicting socially "acceptable" parts of his body. The student explains it was a process of self-identity exploration and becoming comfortable with his own body.[37] This style of *disability art* "works upon able-bodied people's perceptions of normality and unravels these, creating dissonance and doubt,"[38] encouraging them to rethink what they know.

In Toronto, SKETCH offers street involved young people opportunities in a range of art forms, "to build leadership and economic self-sufficiency in the arts; and to cultivate social and environmental change through the arts."[35]

Raising awareness of social issues is often not enough to enact change. The arts offer opportunities for people to actively engage with the issues, to *feel* them and then come to understand their significance.[39] Arts education can emancipate, awaken, and empower those who have been silenced by oppressive powers, thus moving society towards equality and justice for all.
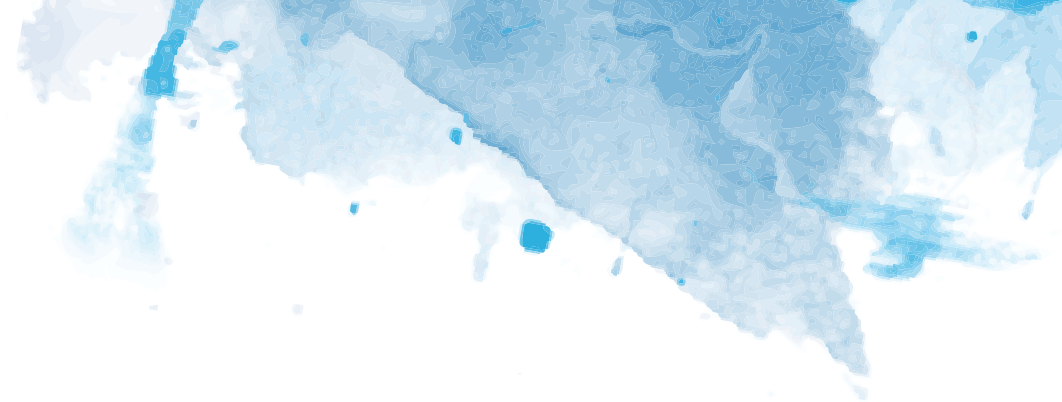
Current Priorities and Practices

International Perspective

Arts education is a global phenomenon taking on a wide range of forms in a variety of venues. Opportunities to learn about and through the arts are provided variously in elementary, secondary, vocational and higher training schools, cultural institutions, and out-of-school, leisure time programming. Learning also takes place in non-arts vocational training, amateur arts activities and other forms of cultural engagement.

Since its inception, UNESCO has recognized arts education as an effective means to achieve its priorities, initially as a way to improve the quality of teaching[40] and later as a method for generating a more creative population capable of responding to the challenges of a new millennium.[41] Today, arts education continues to support UNESCO priorities, contributing significantly to the goals articulated in *Education 2030: The Incheon Declaration and Framework*

for Action: Towards inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all, which recognizes the arts as essential to a quality and relevant education.[42] The arts have much to offer in building "high-level cognitive and non-cognitive/transferable skills . . . such as problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, teamwork, communication skills and conflict resolution, which can be used across a range of occupational fields."[43]

The arts are also a powerful means of engendering the skills and knowledge needed to promote sustainable development, including sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, a culture of peace, global citizenship and cultural diversity.[44] This application of arts education clearly supports the recently adopted UN *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.*[45] UNESCO will contribute to the implementation of this agenda through its work in its core programs in Education, Sciences, Culture, and Communication and information. With the Sustainable Development goals, also known as Global Goals that universally apply to all, countries will mobilize efforts to end all forms of poverty, fight inequalities and tackle climate change, while ensuring that no one is left behind. Areas identified in these goals that are closely associated with arts and learning practices include education, sustainable cities, the environment, sustainable consumption and production patterns, and peaceful and inclusive societies. Arts education also has an important role to play in the domains of good health and well-being.

The New Urban Agenda, adopted at Habitat III in Quinto, recognizes culture as an important factor in achieving its goals.[46] Arts education is able to provide valuable approaches to "empower and strengthen skills and abilities of women and girls, children and youth, older persons and persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and local communities, as well as persons in vulnerable situations for shaping governance processes, engaging in dialogue, and promoting and protecting human rights and anti-discrimination, to ensure their effective participation in urban and territorial development decision-making."[47]

A focal point for understanding arts and learning in this context is the *Seoul Agenda* which places great emphasis on the capacity of arts education to contribute to solving social and cultural problems.[48] For example, it emphasizes the role of arts education in promoting peace, cultural diversity, intercultural understanding, a creative and adaptive workforce, and recovery in post-conflict and post-disaster situations. While the *Seoul Agenda* does not specifically reference a role for arts education in addressing Indigenous cultural and social issues, the strategies related to cultural diversity and intercultural understanding lay the groundwork for the application of arts education in Indigenous contexts.

Canadian Perspective

Arts education in Canada reflects, in many ways, the scope and range of arts and learning opportunities proposed by the *Seoul Agenda.* A report prepared for the Council of Ministers of Education (CMEC), in collaboration with the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, conveys a sense of the extent of arts education in Canada, explaining that "all 13 educational jurisdictions provide arts education in the schools"[49] and that out-of-school providers of arts education include "other provincial and territorial government departments, arts councils, foundations, performing arts companies and centres, public museums and galleries, teachers' associations, artists' groups, not-for-profit and community groups. . . ."[50]

The diversity of arts education options available to Canadians is confirmed by a mapping project of the Canadian Network for Arts and Learning (CNAL), recently funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation, that has already identified more than a thousand arts and learning providers in the Province of Ontario and that is projected to include several thousand across the country.[51] This includes specialized schools for the arts, professional arts organizations that offer educational programming, private studios and academies for a range of art forms, organizations that engage disadvantaged, challenged and at-risk youth in artistic expression, arts programs for life-long learners, arts centres for diverse linguistic and cultural groups, Indigenous youth cultural groups, municipal and provincial arts councils, and professional teachers' associations.

Financial support for these programs originates from provincial ministries of education, provincial and federal ministries of culture, public and private foundations, individual donations and, in the case of many out-of-school programs, registration fees.

Confronting the Gap

Notwithstanding the scope and range of arts education activities reported across Canada and around the world, and bearing in mind the remarkable achievements to be found in many jurisdictions, the potential of learning in the arts to significantly impact UNESCO priorities for the well-being of young people and life-long learners on an equitable basis across the globe remains in jeopardy. The aspirations of the *Seoul Agenda* are being seriously impeded by a lack of awareness and inadequate implementation. There is a clear and pressing need for governments and stakeholders to take measures to overcome these deficiencies.

International Perspective

Narrow interpretations of what constitutes an arts education activity limit the impact of arts and learning. While educators in many countries appear to understand that artistic activities in schools fall within the general category of arts education, fewer than half acknowledge practicing as an amateur artist or musician in the same light.[52] This indicates that the significance of informal (out-of-school) arts education is not widely recognized. Similarly, the intercultural/transcultural/identity component of arts education occupies a relatively low position in the spectrum of recognized arts education practices. Perhaps most troubling is the inequity of access experienced everywhere. "Participation in arts and cultural heritage is generally assessed to be (much) lower than average among low income groups, people with no or low education, the rural population, migrants and refugees, and elderly people. . . . In contrast, participation is assessed to be (much) higher than average among the highly educated and the urban population."[53] Another significant challenge is the gap between the relatively healthy scope of arts offerings in schools in more affluent countries and far fewer opportunities in less affluent parts of the world.

Canadian Perspective

Canada ranks among those countries in which the arts are officially mandated in school curricula and many excellent community-based activities are available. Nevertheless, access to arts and learning is far from universal. Canadian stakeholders report feeling that the arts are not valued within the school system or society at large. They are concerned that the people funding and making decisions in education do not see the arts as being fundamental to human development.[54]

Several factors have been identified as inhibiting access to arts and learning in Canada. Rural and low-income communities are less well-served and adult learners are often overlooked in arts programming. For some populations including the elderly, individuals with special needs, and school groups with limited funding, the cost of transportation to arts opportunities can be a significant deterrent to participation. Canadians in all age groups have difficulty finding information about available programs.[55]

"There needs to be some kind of training for art educators, and training for artists, and training for teachers."

Notwithstanding curricular directives to include arts in schools, there are limiting factors in the formal sector. Generalist teachers, those responsible for delivering arts education in the primary grades, do not benefit from equitable training in the arts. Even when professional development is available, it often takes the form of one-time workshops which cannot deliver adequate skills and knowledge. An important strategy to overcome this lack of teacher capacity is the use of professional artists as guest instructors. Unfortunately, many artists who offer this service have no training in pedagogy, often making it difficult for them to facilitate groups of students or to deliver developmentally or age-appropriate programming.

Mandate and Capacity

The partnership that has produced this position paper is committed to leading an initiative to close the gap by re-energizing the *Seoul Agenda*. The Canadian Commission for UNESCO, the Canadian Network for Arts and Learning, and the UNESCO Chair in Arts and Learning at Queen's University (Canada) believe that, together, they hold a mandate, derived from their organizational missions, to provide leadership in this project and that they also have the capacity to achieve success. They are connected with arts education stakeholders across Canada and internationally. They have access to governmental and non-governmental organizations in culture and in education including National Commissions for UNESCO in other countries. Moreover, they have a history of collaboration that will enable them to jointly contribute to the management of a challenging and far-reaching enterprise.

The Canadian Commission for UNESCO

The Canadian Commission for UNESCO (CCUNESCO) serves as a bridge between Canadians and the vital work of UNESCO. By promoting UNESCO values, priorities and programs in Canada and by bringing the voices of Canadian experts to the international stage, the Commission contributes to a peaceful, equitable and sustainable future that leaves no one behind.

The Commission is a network of networks that helps Canadians share knowledge, locally and globally, in order to build peace in the minds of men and women. To do so, the Commission facilitates cooperation in the fields of education, sciences, culture, communication and information to address some of the most complex challenges facing humanity. Its activities are guided by the United Nations' *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* and other UNESCO priorities. The Commission operates under the authority of the Canada Council for the Arts.

The Canadian Network for Arts & Learning

The Canadian Network for Arts and Learning (CNAL) provides a nexus where Canada's arts and learning community connects. As a charitable foundation, it serves a wide constituency – artists, educators, students, patrons, art schools and centres, performing arts organizations, universities and museums. National in scope and uniquely positioned to mobilize practitioners, academics, decision-makers and funders, the Network's ultimate goal is to cultivate a more creative, innovative and prosperous Canada. To this end, CNAL brings together stakeholders to exchange knowledge and initiate collaboration through national conferences, regional networking hubs, and social media – all informed by original research.

With funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, CNAL is currently constructing a digital map that will represent arts and learning in the Province of Ontario. A long term goal is to extend the scope of the map to embrace arts education across Canada.

The UNESCO Chair in Arts and Learning

Established in 2007 in the Faculty of Education at Queen's University, one of Canada's leading research-intensive universities, the UNESCO Chair in Arts and Learning aims to promote the arts as a means of engaging learners and achieving personal and academic learning goals, to build capacity for teachers in arts education, and to monitor implementation of The *Seoul Agenda*. The Chair has a strong connection to the *Seoul Agenda* because it was written by founding Chairholder, Professor Emeritus Larry O'Farrell in his capacity as General Rapporteur of the Second UNESCO World Conference on Arts Education.[56]

The Chair has provided leadership for the International Network for Research in Arts Education (INRAE), with more than 125 research colleagues in 46 countries. The mission of INRAE is to promote high quality international research in arts education (formal, non-formal, and informal), to conduct research on the implementation of the *Seoul Agenda*, and to serve as a forum for the dissemination of research. The Chair joined with other members of INRAE to sustain the work of this organization by establishing the UNESCO UNITWIN Network on Arts Education Research for Cultural Diversity and Sustainable Development which was approved by UNESCO in 2017.

Strategies to Reinvigorate the Seoul Agenda

A common barrier to enacting positive change on a broad scale is a failure to acknowledge and adopt evidence into policy, practice, and public opinion. *Evidence* "can be inclusive of a range of perspectives, methods and forms of information, including… professional knowledge,"[57] and the value of such evidence should not be discounted in its ability to address societal concerns. The goals of the *Seoul Agenda*, as well as the evidence presented in this paper, derive from a wealth of research, professional, and community knowledge. Re-invigorating the *Seoul Agenda* will involve translating this knowledge to various key partners and developing practical strategies for implementation. Thus, in this section we draw on the field of *knowledge translation*[58] to outline how the goals of the *Seoul Agenda* can be promoted and adopted in diverse regions. Knowledge translation (KT), also known as *knowledge mobilization* or *knowledge exchange*, plays a vital role in the uptake of evidence into practice across domains, encompassing more than the mere public dissemination of information.[59] It involves an iterative and holistic approach that values the contributions of multiple stakeholders, from identifying goals to measuring accountability and impact.[60]

Lavis, Robertson, Woodside, McLeod, and Abelson provide a useful five-question strategy for researchers looking to effectively transfer knowledge to decision makers and target audiences.[61] We have adapted these questions into the following three steps to promote the successful transfer and uptake of the *Seoul Agenda* to arts and learning stakeholders across the globe.

"I have to remember to stay open myself to creating these partnerships and making these connections and finding the solutions that I need."

1. Identifying goals and audiences

What should be transferred?
To whom should it be transferred?

Setting clear goals and messages that are tailored to specific audiences and contexts is a key first step in KT.[62] Although the goals of the *Seoul Agenda* are clearly outlined and result from an international pool of concerns, each individual action item may not be applicable to every context, or may need to be specified/reworded to suit the needs of the population. Some countries or communities may also need to prioritize certain objectives over others, depending on their current situations. In Canada, for instance, accessibility to arts education opportunities is a priority concern for many people, including low-income communities, individuals with special needs, and people living in rural areas. Therefore, "enact[ing] policies and deploy[ing] resources to ensure sustainable access"[63] to arts programming might be one of the immediate short term objectives within Canadian contexts. Ultimately, those decisions lie with organizations, governments, and populations in each participating country, as only they can know the needs of their particular cultural environments. However, the overall aim of the *Seoul Agenda* remains consistent across sectors: the importance and provision of high-quality arts education for learners of all ages "to positively renew educational systems, [and] to achieve crucial social and cultural objectives."[64] We aim this message at:

- UNESCO National Commissions

- Decision-makers in formal education

- Universities and research centres

- Artists and educators

- Corporations with creative interests

- Professional arts organizations, museums, libraries

- Associations and networks in arts education

- The general public

But who then has the ability to change opinions? How can we move forward with these aims? The next step involves finding the right people and strategies that work for individual contexts.

2. Identifying key partners and strategies

Who should transfer this knowledge?
How should it be transferred?

Key partners who know the context and can relate to the intended audience are needed to ensure the effective transfer of goals and messages. *Opinion leaders* are "near-peers" that hold credibility within decision-making environments and influence the views and actions of their cohorts.[65] Finding opinion leaders within different countries to act as messengers, or *knowledge brokers*, of the *Seoul Agenda* is an essential step towards positive change. Within Canada, we have identified the Canadian Commission for UNESCO and the Canadian Network for Arts and Learning as two organizations with opinion leaders. Elsewhere, potential leaders may be found in UNESCO chairs for arts and learning, UNESCO Observatories,

and the UNITWIN Network, among others. Media leaders and publishers should also be explored as potential key partners and knowledge brokers. In Canada, this involves reaching out to both French and English media outlets.

Although opinion leaders can help spread the word, a strategic plan is still needed to put words into action. Developing a detailed KT plan can significantly improve the likelihood of uptake on local and national levels. Drawing from sources that focus on improving research use,[66] we have compiled the following selected strategies and corresponding suggested examples to assist those involved in the task of translating the goals of the *Seoul Agenda* (see Table 1). The ultimate aim of these strategies is to produce action and generate lasting impact.

Table 1. Some strategies and examples for promoting the uptake of the Seoul Agenda in diverse contexts

STRATEGY	EXAMPLES
Circulating information, research, and knowledge pertaining to the goals of Seoul Agenda in accessible formats that are tailored to local needs	• Web technologies* (e.g., blogs, podcasts, social tagging, wikis) • Presentations at local council meetings • Arts-based approaches (e.g., slam poetry readings, exhibitions, and plays, that convey the value of the arts) • TED Talks by local artists, researchers, and educators • Data visualizations (e.g., graphs, maps, highlights, etc.) within online content, presentations, and hard copy documents • News media outlets and publishers (e.g., radio, newspapers, magazines, newsletters, TV)
Identifying context-specific barriers and making use of enablers	*Barriers:* • Lack of accessibility to arts programming • Unconvinced decision-makers • Unsupportive culture • Time constraints *Enablers:* • Arts funding bodies • Knowledge brokers • Support systems and arts "champions" • Openness to change
Building *trust* and strengthening relationships among research, governing, and practice communities	• Two-way approach to communication between all parties • Face-to-face meetings • Continuous and respectful exchanges of knowledge and opinions • Making use of web applications (e.g., Google docs, wikis) that facilitate knowledge sharing, content creation, and social networking
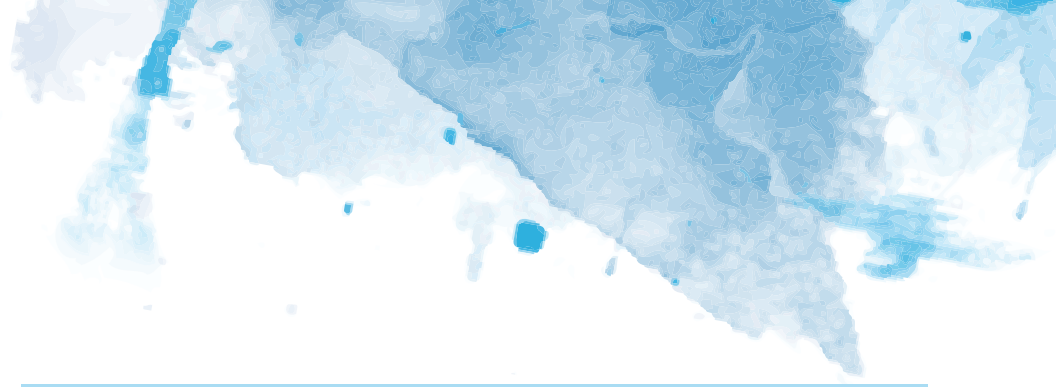
Creating and/or strengthening networks and communities of practice in the arts	• Local steering committees for the arts that include artists, educators, community leaders, and learners • Increasing access to arts and learning through various online platforms (e.g., central online hubs for arts communities*) • Workshops and spaces (i.e., in-person as well as virtual learning communities) where practitioners can share their skills with others
Involving various stakeholders in planning, implementing, and measuring the impact of initiatives	• Gathering perspectives from artists, researchers, educators, parents, and learners on the specific needs of the community* • World summits and conferences on arts and learning (funds could be allocated to include scholars and practitioners from diverse areas and populations) • Developing manageable and attainable goals that can be shared amongst different stakeholders • Inviting continuous feedback from all stakeholders
Providing participatory education and training opportunities for stakeholders so they may develop the skills required to implement change in their environments	• Have someone knowledgeable in organizational change and program evaluation lead workshops to community arts leaders • Offer training programs for artists seeking to become qualified educators (and vice versa) • Knowledge fairs designed to increase awareness of arts knowledge and approaches to implementation
Providing reinforcements to ensure longevity and consistency	• Continuous communication and feedback among researchers, decision-makers, practitioners, and the public • Constant access to current information and knowledge (e.g., through a corporate intranet) • Financial incentives (e.g., arts scholarships for low-income students, partnerships development grants, various subsidies to train and bring artists into schools, funds allocated to accountability measures)

*See Canadian Network for Arts and Learning online mapping project as an example
http://www.eduarts.ca/2016/05/ontario-trillium-foundation-supports-cnals-mapping-project

3. Monitoring Change and Impact

With what effect should knowledge be transferred?

The *Seoul Agenda* is intended to have a lasting impact on the state of arts and learning across the world, that much is clear. But what do we specifically hope to see and hear as we move forward with the *Seoul Agenda* in local contexts? How will we know that the strategies are having any effect on policy, practice, or the general attitudes of the population? The meaning of impact can range from simple awareness and understanding of issues, to changes in attitude, to modifications in policy and practice.[67] Given that the goals of *Seoul Agenda* span the spectrum of impact, simply looking at changes in policy will not provide a comprehensive understanding of how arts and learning are faring worldwide. Change and impact should be examined at various structural levels, through multiple media, and with different people. Nutley et al. provide a set of questions to help frame the assessment of impact,[68] which we have adapted here:

- Who are the key stakeholders and how do they benefit from the impact assessment?

- What is the purpose of the assessment (e.g., learning, enabling judgments, furthering research)?

- Will the assessment be primarily qualitative or quantitative in nature? What are the implications of this? Does it serve the purpose of the impact assessment?

- Is the focus on outputs (what is produced), impact processes (how outputs are used), or outcomes (consequences of changes)?

- Are there enough resources to carry out the assessment? Is it worthwhile?

Surveys, focus groups, observations, and formal program evaluations are some approaches to collecting impact data from various interventions. For example, as part of the Monitoring National Arts Education Systems (MONAES) project, a large-scale survey was conducted with 381 arts education experts worldwide to provide insight into observable and measurable aspects of the *Seoul Agenda*.[69] More studies of this nature are needed on local, national, and international levels on an ongoing basis that include opinions of a wide range of stakeholders, and also that examine the more nuanced and perhaps unintended impacts of the *Seoul Agenda*.

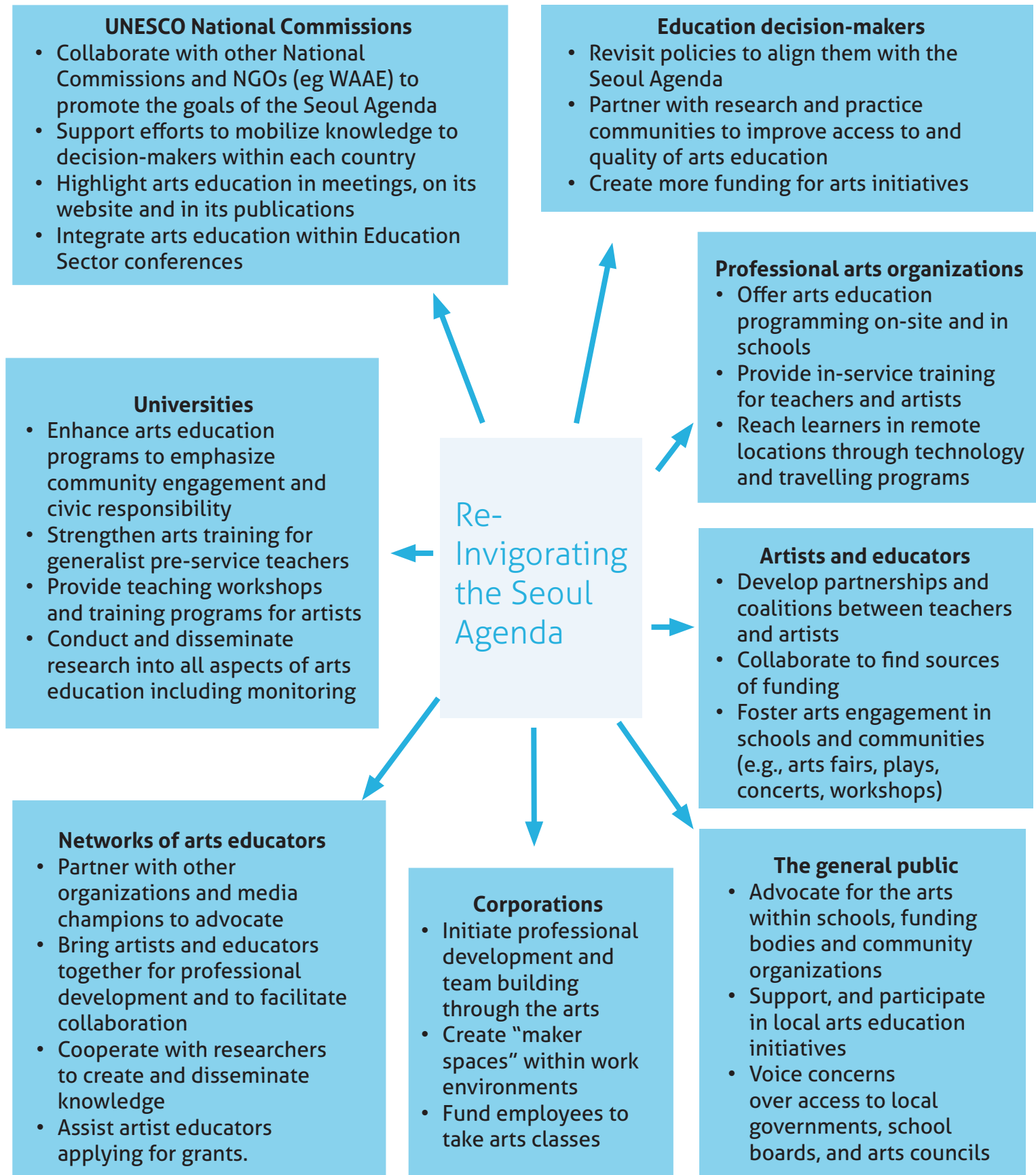## "One of the things we need is policies."

Next Steps for Project Partners

- Identify priority areas of the Seoul Agenda by assessing local contexts

- Build partnerships with influential leaders and identify potential knowledge brokers

- Choose appropriate and manageable strategies for:

a. Translating knowledge to community stakeholders;

b. Building their capacity to implement change;

c. Reinforcing and monitoring implementation efforts, and;

d. Monitoring change and impact locally.

What might transformative action look like within different stakeholder groups?

This graph is presented to illustrate the kinds of action that might be taken by various stakeholders in aid of re-invigorating the Seoul Agenda. It is not intended to be prescriptive or to substitute for the thoughtful process of knowledge translation described above.

UNESCO National Commissions
- Collaborate with other National Commissions and NGOs (eg WAAE) to promote the goals of the Seoul Agenda
- Support efforts to mobilize knowledge to decision-makers within each country
- Highlight arts education in meetings, on its website and in its publications
- Integrate arts education within Education Sector conferences

Education decision-makers
- Revisit policies to align them with the Seoul Agenda
- Partner with research and practice communities to improve access to and quality of arts education
- Create more funding for arts initiatives

Professional arts organizations
- Offer arts education programming on-site and in schools
- Provide in-service training for teachers and artists
- Reach learners in remote locations through technology and travelling programs

Universities
- Enhance arts education programs to emphasize community engagement and civic responsibility
- Strengthen arts training for generalist pre-service teachers
- Provide teaching workshops and training programs for artists
- Conduct and disseminate research into all aspects of arts education including monitoring

Re-Invigorating the Seoul Agenda

Artists and educators
- Develop partnerships and coalitions between teachers and artists
- Collaborate to find sources of funding
- Foster arts engagement in schools and communities (e.g., arts fairs, plays, concerts, workshops)

Networks of arts educators
- Partner with other organizations and media champions to advocate
- Bring artists and educators together for professional development and to facilitate collaboration
- Cooperate with researchers to create and disseminate knowledge
- Assist artist educators applying for grants.

Corporations
- Initiate professional development and team building through the arts
- Create "maker spaces" within work environments
- Fund employees to take arts classes

The general public
- Advocate for the arts within schools, funding bodies and community organizations
- Support, and participate in local arts education initiatives
- Voice concerns over access to local governments, school boards, and arts councils

Conclusion

Arts education has a vital role to play in pursuit of national and international goals for transformative learning, sustainability, the growth of creative and productive societies, the enhancement of personal well-being, and the fostering of intercultural understanding and a culture of peace. In 2011, UNESCO Member States recognized this potential by unanimously endorsing the *Seoul Agenda*. Today, arts education remains at the heart of global priorities for Sustainable Development.

Nevertheless, at a time of social and environmental peril, and when arts education offers valuable strategies to address the issues, significant gaps remain in understanding and implementation of the *Seoul Agenda*. The partnership that produced this position paper is committed to collaborating on a renewal of engagement with the goals and strategies of the Seoul Agenda at all levels of participation. The Canadian Commission for UNESCO will lead this re-engagement among National Commissions for UNESCO. The Canadian Network for Arts and Learning will mobilize action nationally. And, the UNESCO Chair in Arts and Learning will work with researchers and practitioners to monitor implementation and align the work of arts educators to the principles of sustainable development.

All three partners will reach out to international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as the World
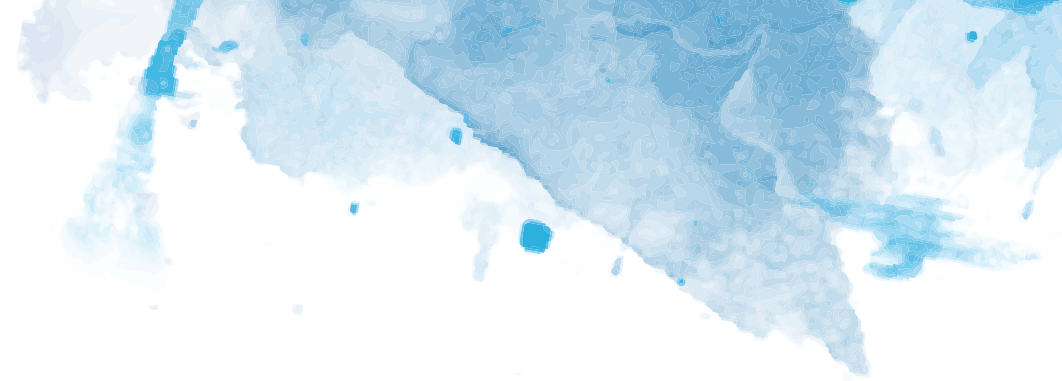
> "Keep hope. Hope is important. And don't forget that people will buy your joy. If they like what you're selling they will support you."

Alliance for Arts Education (WAAE) and its member organizations, the International Drama/Theatre and Education Association (IDEA); International Society for Education through Art (INSEA); International Society for Music Education (ISME); and, World Dance Alliance (WDA) as potential partners in this initiative. We will also engage with national and regional NGOs, UNESCO Chairs and Observatories and the UNESCO UNITWIN Network for Arts Education Research for Cultural Diversity and Sustainable Development.

Moreover, the partners will work together to ensure that efforts in each domain are supported by all. Together, we intend to substantially strengthen access to arts education to impact the lives of children, youth, life-long learners and communities at large.

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