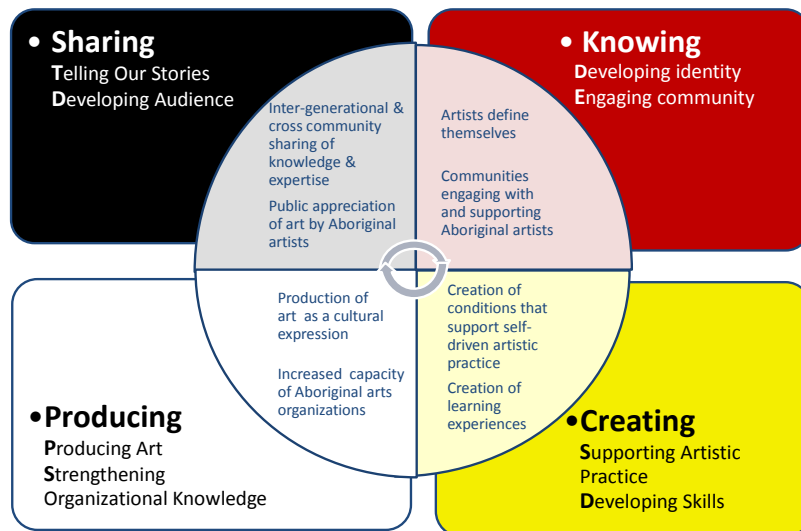


Evaluation of the Suite of Aboriginal Arts Programs

Final Summary Report

Aboriginal Arts Programs Pathway



Prepared for:



Canada Council for the Arts
Conseil des arts du Canada

Research and Evaluation Section

Prepared by:



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Finally, a special thanks to Aboriginal artists and representatives of Aboriginal arts organizations who responded to the web survey and who agreed to be interviewed for the case studies. Their insights and stories are the foundation for this evaluation.

- Larry Bremner, Denise Belanger, Natalie Kishchuk and Linda Lee

A. Introduction

1. Background

Over the past 20 years, the Canada Council for the Arts has provided direct support to Aboriginal artists and arts organizations through a number of targeted programs. In recognition of this 20th anniversary, the Canada Council decided to undertake an evaluation of the suite of Aboriginal Arts programs (i.e. dedicated programs with a mandate to serve Aboriginal artists and arts organizations) available at the Canada Council. Through a comprehensive two year evaluation, the story of how this investment has served Aboriginal artists, organizations and communities since 1996 is told.

While the Canada Council's support to Aboriginal arts and artists has evolved over time, support currently includes the provision of grants through 15 programs of which 10 are dedicated funding programs for Aboriginal artists and organizations delivered through the Arts Disciplines Division with the remaining five offered through the Aboriginal Arts Office. In addition, Aboriginal artists and organizations that focus on Aboriginal art are funded through other Canada Council programs; these programs may enhance, or function independently from the dedicated programs.

The Phase 1 Report (May 2014) presented a preliminary document and literature review, which addressed the history and evolution of the suite of Aboriginal programs. It also presented an initial analysis of Aboriginal arts applicants, as well as a detailed workplan for the rest of the evaluation. The Phase 2 Report (Spring 2015) provided a summary analysis based on the findings from the file review, web survey of applicants, the two case studies, and a secondary analysis of findings related to younger artists and to artists and organizations located in small remote and/or Northern communities. A summary of the *Petapan First Light Symposium* and key informant staff interviews were also included. As well, the Phase 2 report included a description of the Pathway to Outcomes and its development. The Phase 3 report (June 2015) provided a discussion of the efficiency of the suite of programs.

This document represents the Final Summary Report. It summarizes the findings from all lines of inquiry, addressing the relevance of programs, accomplishments and impacts on Aboriginal artists and arts organizations. Conclusions and directions for the future are included. The Final Summary Report is intended to help guide the Canada Council in assessing options and opportunities for providing future support to Aboriginal artists and arts organizations.

2. Focus of the Evaluation

The consultants from Proactive Information Services and Program Evaluation and Beyond were retained to assess and communicate what has been accomplished through this suite of 15 Aboriginal Arts programs and to identify pathways to strengthen impact going forward. This is not an evaluation of a specific program; it addresses the suite of Aboriginal Arts programs.

The specific objectives of the evaluation were;

- To examine whether the programs' objectives are still relevant,
- To explore and assess accomplishments,
- To document impacts of the programs on Aboriginal artists, organizations, and communities.

A secondary objective was to review the efficiency and appropriateness of the program delivery mechanisms.

This evaluation was undertaken while the Council itself is undergoing renewal. As noted by the Director and CEO of the Council in his address to the Annual Public Meeting in January 2015;

We also want to turn a corner in the history of the Council and possibly, even, in the history of the country, by creating a specific program for Aboriginal arts while inviting First Nations, Métis and Inuit artists to take advantage of all our other programs if they want to as well. The Council's Aboriginal Arts Office is leading the development of this program, with the support of our Policy and Evaluation sections.

While unintended at the beginning of the evaluation, the alignment of the evaluation and the extensive consultation involved with the new funding model has been synergistic. The recommendations take into account the changing environment at the Canada Council.

3. Methodological Overview

The evaluation of the suite of Aboriginal Arts program employs multiple methods, both qualitative and quantitative, in order to answer the evaluation questions in an authentic and comprehensive manner. This report brings together findings from all lines of evidence. Explanations of the methodology for each line of evidence are found in the Phase 1, Phase 2 and Phase 3 reports.

While the limitations are included for each method, one more general limitation should be noted. It appears many of the individuals and organizations participating in the evaluation have deep connections with the Canada Council, as may be the case in any evaluation undertaken by the Canada Council. Many are multiple time grant recipients, award winners and peer assessment committee (PAC) members. While their input and insights have been extremely helpful, their experiences provide a view of the Council that is likely different than less successful applicants. While this phenomenon does occur in program evaluations (i.e., people who feel most connected to a program are more likely to respond), this is not always the case.¹

B. The Pathway

1. Introduction

As part of the evaluation of the Suite of Aboriginal Arts programs, a logic model (or models) was to be created. Program logic models are diagrams or schematic representations that give a picture of how the program theoretically works to achieve benefits (outcomes) for participants. They show predicted cause and effect. Logic models are most often used when working in a simple system where the priority population is reasonably stable and well understood. They are used when one can reasonably predict which activities will create certain results.

Logic models are useful in that they develop a common language among stakeholders, articulate explicit outcomes, identify important variables to measure in order to enable more effective evaluation, and provide a credible framework for reporting. They can also support improved program design, planning and management. However, logic models come with certain limitations and challenges. Logic models were first developed based on a logical, sequential world view which is linear rather than holistic. They assume that cause and effect are known or can be predicted, but they do not take into account unexpected results.

For the suite of Aboriginal Arts programs it was important to have a 'logic model,' but one which could respect Aboriginal ways of knowing. The 'Pathway,' developed for the suite of Aboriginal Arts programs, is based on the Medicine Wheel which is traditionally meant to make sense of the world without isolating or compartmentalizing different understandings or views of the world. Therefore, the Pathway with its component parts serves the purpose of a logic model, but combines the circular with the linear, representing a coming together or hybrid of Indigenous (circular, holistic) and 'Western' (sequential, causal) ways of conceptualizing the world.

¹ An attempt has been made to address this issue to some extent through analysis of the web survey data identifying the experiences and opinions of one time and unsuccessful applicants.

2. Development of the Pathway

The Pathway to Outcomes, a foundational piece of the review, was developed through a series of steps and closely involved Canada Council staff throughout the development process. The first step was the identification of seven themes from the review of the Aboriginal grant program documents, some (but not all) of which included program objectives. The themes were a way of providing a first step towards defining outcomes and clustering the programs. A matrix was then developed to show the relationship between themes and programs. Informal interviews were undertaken with the Program Officers and the matrix was then presented to them in order to validate the relationships between themes and programs.

The matrix was revised based upon the feedback received from the Program Officers and became the basis for the development of the Pathway which serves the purpose of a more standard logic model. Program Officers were again interviewed by the Evaluation and Research Officer and met with the evaluators to share “success stories.” Revisions were made which resulted in eight themes using the language from Program Officers interviews and ‘success stories’ meeting. The first draft of the central Pathway was developed based on the idea of the medicine wheel, using the eight themes to ground the four quadrants.

Feedback was received from the Council’s Research and Evaluation Section on initial language/re-titling of the four quadrants. Revisions were made with expansion of four quadrants into outcomes and key indicators, as well as a description of the Pathway. Further discussion took place with Research and Evaluation on the revised Pathway, including attention to linking to the language to existing language used by Council.

Revisions were made to the Pathway based on feedback received from Research and Evaluation as well as other Canada Council staff. The Pathway was finalized in September 2014 and shared with senior staff at the November 2014 presentation.

3. Explanation of the Pathway

Program Officers were again interviewed by the Evaluation and Research Officer and met with the evaluators to share “success stories.” Revisions were made which resulted in eight themes using the language from Program Officers interviews and ‘success stories’ meeting. The first draft of the central Pathway was developed based on the idea of the medicine wheel, using the eight themes to ground the four quadrants.

Each quadrant is named to reflect its two themes. The inner circle identifies an

outcome related to each theme. For example, Knowing includes the theme of 'developing identity' for which the outcome is 'artists define themselves.' Each quadrant is then further defined, showing the inter-relationship between the outcomes, as well as the indicators for the outcomes. For example, the indicators for 'artists define themselves' are 'artists are developing a vision for their work' and 'artists can better express their artistic and cultural identities.' Inter-relationship between and among the indicators is also revealed in the detail for each quadrant.

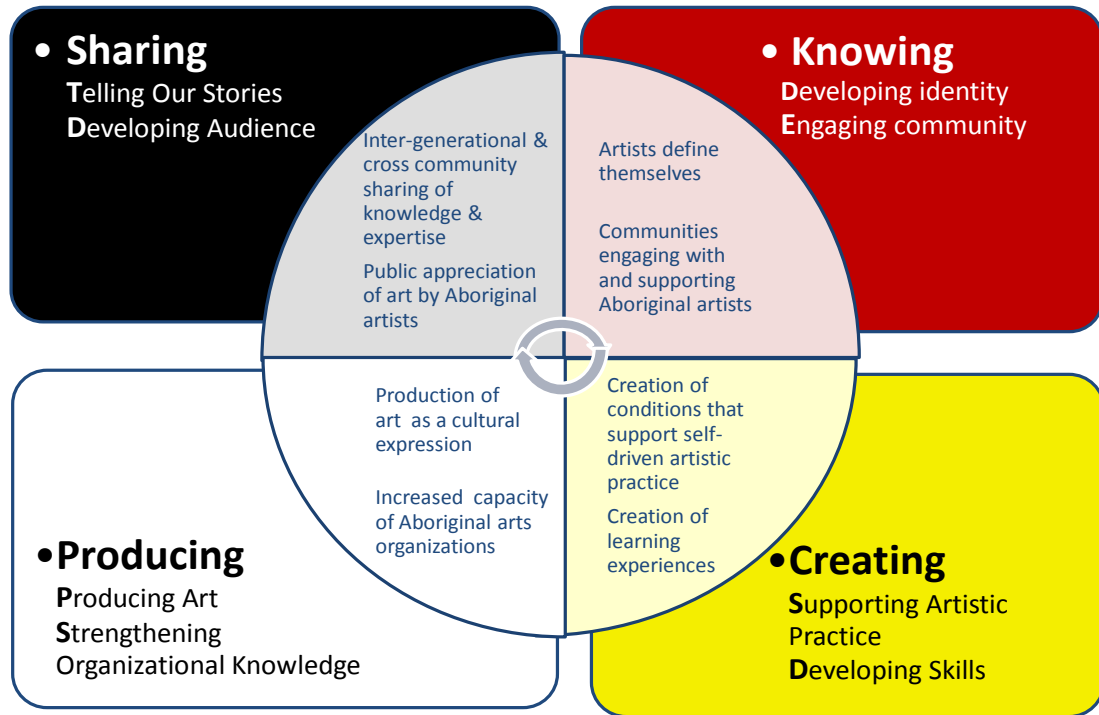
Another piece to the Pathway is the clustering of programs under the four quadrants and their themes. Programs may appear in one or many places. For example, the *Aboriginal People's Collaborative Exchange* is placed in:

- Knowing – Developing Identity
- Knowing – Engaging Community
- Creating – Supporting Artistic Practice
- Producing – Producing Art
- Sharing – Telling Our Stories

Once defined, the outcomes and indicators in the Pathway were used as the framework for the File Review, to guide the development of questions in the web-survey related to impact of funding, as well as to provide an evaluation focus for the case studies.

4. The Pathway – Outcomes and Indicators

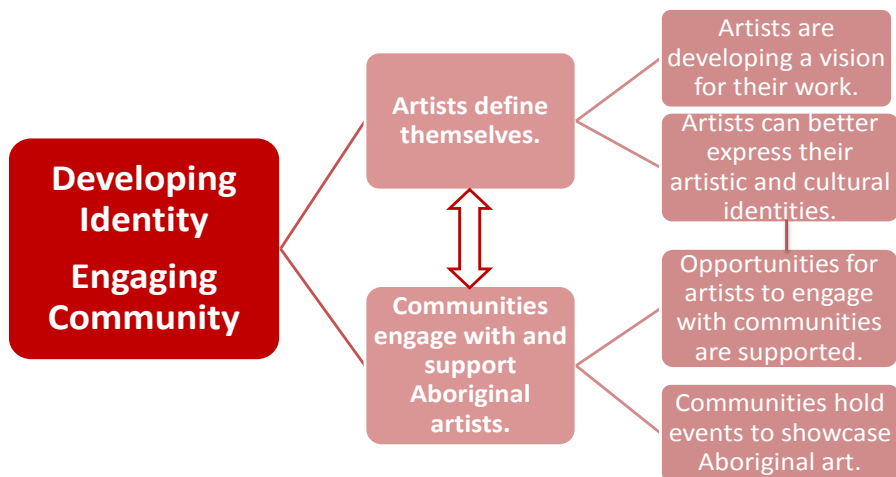
Aboriginal Arts Programs Pathway



a) Outcomes and Indicators

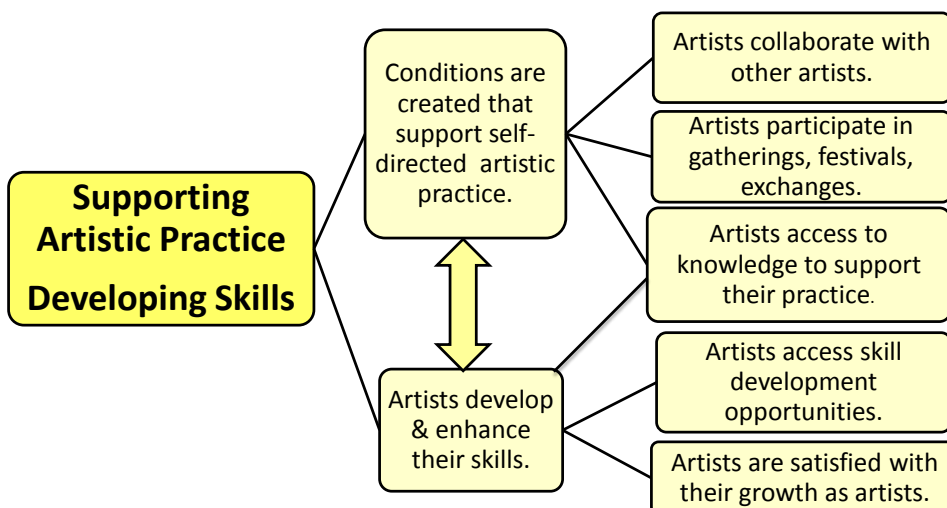
i. Knowing

Knowing – Outcomes & Indicators



ii. Creating

Creating – Outcomes & Indicators



iii. Producing

Producing – Outcomes & Indicators

Producing Art as a Cultural Expression

Strengthening Organizational Knowledge

Art is produced or performed by Aboriginal artists.

Aboriginal Arts organizations/artists have increased capacity.

Works are produced in a variety of disciplines.

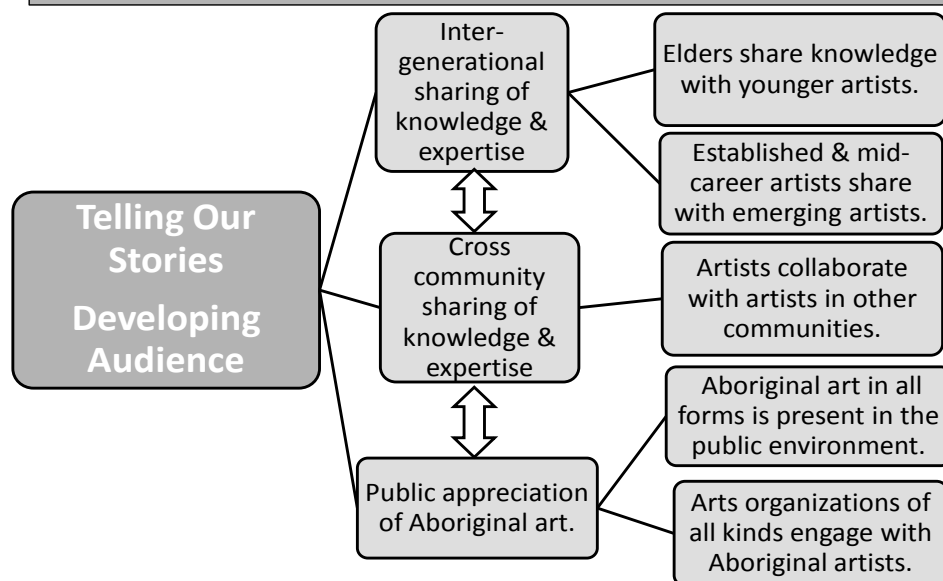
Works of art support cultural identity.

Career opportunities for Aboriginal artists are enhanced.

Organizations have networks and connections that support internal capacity.

iv. Sharing

Sharing – Outcomes & Indicators



b) Program Clustering

The programs were clustered under the four quadrants.

<p><u>Sharing</u></p> <p><i>Telling Our Stories</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal People’s Collaborative Exchange • Elder and Youth Legacy Program • Support to Aboriginal Peoples Dance Companies • Grants to Aboriginal Dance Professionals • Aboriginal Peoples Music Program • Developmental Support to Aboriginal Theatre Organizations • Aboriginal Traditional Art Forms Program • Grants to Aboriginal Curators for Residencies • Traditional Visual Art Forms Programs for Organizations • Grants to Aboriginal Writers, Storytellers and Publishers <p><i>Developing Audience</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building Program for Aboriginal Arts Organizations • Support to Aboriginal Peoples Dance Companies • Aboriginal Peoples Production Project Grants in Dance • Grants to Aboriginal Dance Professionals • Aboriginal Peoples Music Program • Aboriginal Traditional Art Forms Program • Traditional Visual Art Forms Programs for Organizations • Grants to Aboriginal Writers, Storytellers and Publishers 	<p><u>Knowing</u></p> <p><i>Developing Identity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal People’s Collaborative Exchange • Elder and Youth Legacy Program • Aboriginal Peoples Production Project Grants in Dance • Aboriginal Peoples Music Program • Aboriginal Traditional Art Forms Program • Aboriginal Media Arts Program • Grants to Dance Professionals <p><i>Engaging Community</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal People’s Collaborative Exchange • Elder and Youth Legacy Program • Support to Aboriginal Peoples Dance Companies • Aboriginal Peoples Production Project Grants in Dance • Grants to Aboriginal Dance Professionals • Aboriginal Peoples Music Program • Traditional Visual Art Forms Programs for Organizations • Grants to Aboriginal Writers, Storytellers and Publishers
<p><u>Producing</u></p> <p><i>Producing Art</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal People’s Collaborative Exchange • Support to Aboriginal Peoples Dance Companies • Aboriginal Peoples Production Project Grants in Dance • Aboriginal Peoples Music Program • Developmental Support to Aboriginal Theatre Organizations • Aboriginal Traditional Art Forms Program • Grants to Aboriginal Curators for Residencies • Traditional Visual Art Forms Programs for Organizations • Grants to Aboriginal Writers, Storytellers and Publishers • Aboriginal Media Arts Program <p><i>Strengthening Organizational Knowledge</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elder and Youth Legacy Program • Capacity Building Program for Aboriginal Arts Organizations • Support to Aboriginal Peoples Dance Companies • Aboriginal Peoples Production Project Grants in Dance • Aboriginal Peoples Music Program • Developmental Support to Aboriginal Theatre Organizations • Traditional Visual Art Forms Programs for Organizations • Grants to Aboriginal Writers, Storytellers and Publishers • Aboriginal Media Arts Program 	<p><u>Creating</u></p> <p><i>Supporting Artistic Practice</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal People’s Collaborative Exchange • Elder and Youth Legacy Program • Capacity Building Program for Aboriginal Arts Organizations • Support to Aboriginal Peoples Dance Companies • Aboriginal Peoples Production Project Grants in Dance • Grants to Aboriginal Dance Professionals • Aboriginal Peoples Music Program • Developmental Support to Aboriginal Theatre Organizations • Traditional Visual Art Forms Programs for Organizations • Grants to Aboriginal Writers, Storytellers and Publishers <p><i>Developing Skills</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elder and Youth Legacy Program • Support to Aboriginal Peoples Dance Companies • Aboriginal Peoples Production Project Grants in Dance • Grants to Aboriginal Dance Professionals • Aboriginal Peoples Music Program • Aboriginal Traditional Art Forms Program • Grants to Aboriginal Curators for Residencies • Grants to Aboriginal Writers, Storytellers and Publishers • Aboriginal Media Arts Program • Developmental Support to Aboriginal Theatre Organizations

C. Discussion of Findings

Three primary objectives and one secondary objective were identified for the evaluation. The following table identifies the evaluation questions which relate to the articulated objectives. Some questions address more than one objective.

Table 1	
Relationship between Evaluation Objectives and Evaluation Questions	
Objective	To examine if the programs' objectives are still relevant
Question 2	What is the current relationship between the dedicated and non-dedicated programs? How were these programs introduced – as transitional 'feeder' programs, ramping up intake to the 'regular' programs? As 'parallel' programs with a specific cultural lens? Have they morphed over time from the original intention to another form of program? How has the relationship between the dedicated and non-dedicated programs changed over time?
Question 7	Is the organizational structure to support program delivery, services and other targeted support working effectively? What options going forward could the Council consider?
Objective	To explore and assess accomplishments
Question 1	Impact - have these programs made a difference to Aboriginal artists and arts organizations? What have been the impacts of these programs?
Question 3	Has the legacy of this investment led to a greater integration of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal artists (arts organizations) working together? A greater awareness and presence of Aboriginal work within mainstream artistic communities? An integration or increased collaboration between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal artists/organizations?
Objective	To document impacts of the programs on Aboriginal artists, organizations, & communities
Question 1	Impact - have these programs made a difference to Aboriginal artists and arts organizations? What have been the impacts of these programs?
Question 4	Has the Council's ability to outreach to small and rural/Northern/ Québec/reserve communities been effective? What different approaches could be envisioned to embrace and value the artists in these communities?
Question 5	What has been the impact of the capacity building programs in the Aboriginal Arts Office (AAO)? How does the impact and value of this support compare to other capacity building initiatives at the Council? Are there additional needs?
Objective	To review the efficiency and appropriateness of the program delivery mechanisms
Question 2	What is the current relationship between the dedicated and non-dedicated programs? How were these programs introduced – as transitional 'feeder' programs, ramping up intake to the 'regular' programs? As 'parallel' programs with a specific cultural lens? Have they morphed over time from the original intention to another form of program? How has the relationship between the dedicated and non-dedicated programs changed over time?
Question 6	How effective has the program delivery been between two divisions at the Council? Is the design still relevant? What is working and what is not? While application volume varies from discipline to discipline, does a low volume imply the program has exhausted its target/met the original need? Should these programs be phased out, or have the needs of the community simply shifted? How can the design of the program delivery be made more efficient and still meet the needs of these artists? ²
Question 8	Are the Aboriginal Arts Programs delivered in a cost effective manner?

² Due to the change in all the programs, these nuanced aspects of program delivery were not explored.

1. Impact – have these programs made a difference to Aboriginal artists and arts organizations? What have been the impacts of these programs?

The **Pathway to Outcomes** was used as the framework for assessing the achievement of outcomes. As previously discussed, the Pathway with its component parts serves the purpose of a logic model, but represents a coming together or hybrid of Indigenous (circular, holistic) and 'Western' (sequential, causal) ways of conceptualizing the world. The four quadrants of the Pathway (*Knowing, Creating, Producing, Sharing*) are inter-related and mutually supportive. Each quadrant is named to reflect its two themes. The inner circle identifies an outcome related to each theme. Each quadrant is then further defined, showing the inter-relationship between the outcomes, as well as the indicators for the outcomes. Inter-relationship between and among the indicators is also revealed in the detail for each quadrant.

a. Artists

The Aboriginal Arts programs, according to all lines of evidence to date, have made a difference to Aboriginal artists. The programs provide a place where artists feel they will be culturally and artistically understood and supports them in defining themselves as artists. Furthermore, it allows artists to have dedicated time for their artistic practice.

In the file review, the outcomes most often identified for individuals were:

- Knowing* > artists define themselves
- Creating* > artists develop and enhance their skills

In the survey, individuals most often 'strongly agreed' the funding enabled them not only to create new work (*Producing*), but also to express their cultural identity in their work (*Knowing*). When asked what was the most important outcome from the funding, individuals most frequently mentioned having dedicated time for their artistic practice (*Creating*) and producing new work (*Producing*).

Findings from the case study which was focused on the relationship between dedicated and non-dedicated programs confirmed that Canada Council funding, particularly through the dedicated programs, supported the development of artistic identity (*Knowing*), created conditions to support self-driven artistic practice (*Creating*), thus allowing for the production of art by Aboriginal artists (*Producing*). Furthermore, cross community sharing of knowledge and expertise was cited by a number of those interviewed for this case study (*Sharing*).

In summary, the data suggest that funding, particularly through the dedicated programs, strongly supports Aboriginal artists throughout their careers. While different lines of evidence point to some outcomes more strongly than to others, as a collective, outcomes from all quadrants of the Pathway were clearly visible in the findings.

b. Organizations

As with individual artists, the findings suggest that funding has been important to the development and evolution of Aboriginal arts organizations.

In the file review, the outcomes most often identified for organizations were:

- Sharing* > Inter-generational sharing of knowledge and expertise
- Producing* > Aboriginal arts organizations and artists have increased knowledge/capacity

In the survey, organizations most frequently 'strongly agreed' the funding helped them to enhance career opportunities for Aboriginal artists (*Creating*) and supported the cultural identity of Aboriginal artists in their work (*Knowing*). When asked about the most important outcome, organizations most often reported that funding supports organizational development/develop internal capacity (*Producing*) and sharing knowledge with younger artists/students/youth (*Sharing*).

The importance of the funding to increasing organizational capacity emerged in the case study regarding dedicated/non-dedicated programs. However, the case study focused on capacity building shed more light on the importance of capacity building funding to Aboriginal arts organizations. The funding was used for a variety of purposes (from administrative support to networking to special projects to name a few) depending on the organization's context and needs. The *Producing* outcome 'Aboriginal arts organizations have increased knowledge and capacity' was clearly supported by capacity building funding.

Again, as with individual artists, all the outcomes described in the Pathway are visible through the various lines of inquiry, particularly those in Producing and Sharing.

Table 2
Overview of Outcomes with Examples of Corresponding Evidence and Source

Outcomes	Evidence	Source
Knowing		
Artists define themselves	Individuals: Express my cultural identity in my work (96%)	Web Survey
	Organizations: Support cultural identity of Aboriginal artists in their work (94%)	Web Survey
	<i>The process helps to develop artistic and cultural identify. You are accepted by your peer group and you are validated</i> (individual).	Case Study Interview
Communities engage with & support Aboriginal artists.	<i>I have curated over 40 exhibitions</i> [in various communities] (individual).	Case Study Interview
Creating		
Conditions are created that support self-driven artistic practice	Individuals' most important outcome (write-in response): Have dedicated time for my artistic practice (17%)	Web Survey
	<i>For seven years it has enabled me to do what I want to do without working full time</i> (individual). <i>Funding from the Canada Council is great assistance in realizing the birth of a new company</i> (organization).	Case Study Interview
Artists develop & enhance their skills (artistic, administrative)	Most frequently reported by individuals	File Review
	<i>Curatorial residency programs have been very helpful in developing knowledge and skills</i> (individual).	Case Study Interview
Producing		
Art is produced and/or performed by Aboriginal artists	Individuals' most important outcome (write-in response): Create new work (17%)	Web Survey
	Individuals: Express myself as an artist (94%)	Web Survey
	<i>I would never had the chance to produce these works and move forward in this kind of work without funding of this type from time to time</i> (individual).	Case Study Interview
Aboriginal Arts organizations and artists have increased knowledge/capacity	Most frequent outcome identified overall (52%)	File Review
	Most frequently reported by organizations (30%)	File Review
	Organizations' most important outcome (write-in response): Supports organizational development/ internal capacity (15%)	Web Survey
	<i>Capacity building funding has been really great. It has helped with organizational planning and building our strategic plan</i> (organization).	Case Study Interview
Sharing		
Inter-generational sharing of knowledge & expertise	Organizations' most important outcome (write-in response): Share knowledge with younger artists/students/youth (15%)	Web Survey
	<i>This venue has created a place where new artists can start their careers</i> (organization).	Case Study Interview
Cross community sharing of knowledge & expertise	Organizations: Connect with Aboriginal artists (94%)	Web Survey
	<i>I write music and this inspires other people, so I write more and more and this affects communities. I have gone places where I never thought I would go</i> (individual).	Case Study Interview
Public appreciation of art by Aboriginal artists.	<i>My opportunity to travel – Nashville, LA – has resulted in great air play which equals sales. This wouldn't have happened without the funding</i> (individual). <i>We went down to Santa Fe and it gave artists international exposure</i> (organization).	Case Study Interview

2. What is the current relationship between the dedicated and non-dedicated programs? How were these programs introduced – as transitional ‘feeder’ programs, ramping up intake to the ‘regular’ programs? As ‘parallel’ programs with a specific cultural lens? Have they morphed over time from the original intention to another form of program? How has the relationship between the dedicated and non-dedicated programs changed over time?

Evidence from the document and literature review (Phase 1 Report), suggests that funding to Aboriginal artists was imbedded with the first strategic priorities that were introduced in the early 1990’s. These priorities articulated the intent of ensuring equitable access with an underlying assumption that, once equity had been achieved, Aboriginal artists would be fully integrated into mainstream programs. However, in its Report to the Council (1993), the First People’s Committee on the Arts interpreted its mandate as a *“means by which Aboriginal people are able to determine the future of their own artistic practices within the Canada Council.”*³ This is a somewhat different intent, focusing on self-determination and self-actualization. Since 1998, the programs appear to have had a dual intent: addressing access, but also encouraging development and growth in Aboriginal artistic expression. While other events and organizational shifts have occurred since that time, the issues of equity versus sovereignty and Council’s intention behind Aboriginal artists having access to both dedicated and non-dedicated programs remain.

Between 1996 and 2012, almost two-thirds of Aboriginal applicants (62%) have only ever applied to dedicated Aboriginal programs.⁴ Similar proportions of Aboriginal applicants either applied only to non-dedicated programs (14%) or applied to a mix of both (12%), going back and forth over time. Indeed, more applicants applied to non-dedicated programs followed by dedicated programs (7%) rather than the opposite (5%); the opposite of the transition effect. In any case, very infrequent compared to the overall high level of preference for the Aboriginal programs by Aboriginal applicants.

Approximately half of the Aboriginal applicants (54%) have applied only once to the Council. Overall, about half of the applications were to dedicated Aboriginal programs (on average 2.6 out of 5.9 applications were to dedicated programs). Aboriginal organizations make almost twice as many applications as Aboriginal individuals, to both dedicated and non-dedicated programs. It should be noted that in the key informant interviews, the point was made that support for ‘traditional’ artistic practice finds its home in the dedicated programs, as it is not generally recognized within the ‘Westernized’ disciplines (e.g., dance, music, visual arts).

³ The Canada Council and First Peoples Artists & the First Peoples Advisory Committee Report to the Canada Council, Canada Council for the Arts, June 1993.

⁴ Aboriginal artists are deemed Aboriginal through a process of self-identification.

While there were varying levels of understanding regarding the original intents and underlying purpose of the dedicated programs with many of those interviewed – both key Council informants and case study respondents - this rarely dampened their support for the continuation of these programs which they believed were critical supports for Aboriginal artists and organizations. Respondents to the web-survey also highly valued the dedicated programs, although many had accessed non-dedicated programs, according to their needs and where they felt they were most likely to be successful.

A sentiment often expressed across the various lines of evidence concerned the importance of cultural sovereignty for Aboriginal peoples and that this concept should be the basis for the dedicated programs. Aboriginal peoples were viewed not as an equity seeking group, but rather as a sovereignty seeking group:

First Nations peoples consider themselves first and foremost as First Nations They live in a place called Canada, but they are in their own country” (key informant, Canada Council).

[I] realized that my efforts to bring our screen sovereignty story to be seen met with the very obstacles I was trying to tell the story of (individual, web survey).

When do we get to be a vibrant part of this nation of nations? There needs to be a shift in the mind-set (organization, Case Study A).

3. Has the legacy of this investment led to a greater integration of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal artists (arts organizations) working together? A greater awareness and presence of Aboriginal work within mainstream artistic communities? An integration or increased collaboration between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal artists/organizations?

Neither in the survey or file review results are there indications that there has been greater integration between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal artists/arts organizations working together. However, in the capacity building case study, artists and arts organizations were able to give examples of how support from the Canada Council had allowed them to extend their artistic reach and engage audiences across Canada and internationally. While some organizations have had success both nationally and internationally, all those interviewed for the capacity building case study provided examples of how their work had been widely recognized in either or both realms.

Some organizations were able to give examples of working with non-Aboriginal arts organizations. However, this was not the norm. While there was a desire for more collaborations and partnerships, a caution was raised by a number of case study

respondents that partnerships can be a ‘double-edged sword’ in that, while potentially beneficial to smaller Aboriginal organizations, the larger partner organizations may want to be in control, rather than be in a ‘partnership.’

Those interviewed for the capacity building case study definitely saw a role for the Canada Council in supporting the development of these collaborative opportunities, such as providing incentives for partnerships and assisting with the development of MOUs to ensure Aboriginal organizations would be equal partners.

4. Has the Council’s ability to outreach to small and rural/Northern/Québec/reserve communities been effective? What different approaches could be envisioned to embrace and value the artists in these communities?

As explained in the Phase 1 report, the distribution of applicants, applications and funds resemble the distribution of Aboriginal populations across Canada, with a strong presence of artists from BC and Ontario. It is not possible to conclude that there is over or under-representation without knowing the population distribution of Aboriginal artists across Canada, which may be more concentrated in jurisdictions with a stronger artistic community and history. (These data are not available through the National Household Survey.) However, Aboriginal applicants in some jurisdictions make proportionately more applications and some jurisdictions receive relatively more funding.

Discussions at the *Petapan: First Light Indigenous Arts Symposium* suggest that Aboriginal artists in Atlantic Canada are likely under-represented. There was confusion and lack of understanding on the part of many of the participants regarding Canada Council grants and the application process. This perception regarding under-representation was confirmed by the analysis of the Canada Council’s internal data. The Atlantic Provinces have almost twice the number of Aboriginal peoples than do the Territories but receive less than 5% of the grants awarded, as compared to 10% of the grants awarded going to artists in the Territories.⁵ This does not deny there are still issues of access in remote and Northern communities; it simply confirms under-representation in Atlantic Canada.

Québec receives 10% of grants awarded for a larger Aboriginal population than either the Territories or Atlantic Canada. In Québec, there are also situations of remote and Northern communities, in addition to the fact that there are Aboriginal peoples whose first language is French. While 41% of the support for Aboriginal funding in Québec goes to Anglophone Aboriginal artists, there was some concern on the part of a number of key informants within the Canada Council that, for reasons not easily identifiable; some populations of French speaking Aboriginal populations were under-served. Further exploration as to whether this corresponds

⁵ Data represent the regional distribution of Aboriginal applicants, applying to any Canada Council Program 1996-2012, as compared to Census population data.

to remote First Nations and/or Inuit communities might be warranted by the Canada Council.

Web-survey results showed that those who did live in small/remote/Northern communities were very positive about the support they received from the Canada Council and the importance of dedicated programs. However, the respondents represent artists already connected with Canada Council.

Many of those interviewed, including both Canada Council staff and participants in the case studies, spoke of issues of access, particularly in rural, remote and Northern communities. Aboriginal arts in Canada was described by a number of those interviewed in the case studies as 'urban centric.' There were suggestions by those interviewed in the case studies regarding the need for more in-person outreach to remote and Northern communities.

5. What has been the impact of the capacity building programs in the Aboriginal Arts Office (AAO)? How does the impact and value of this support compare to other capacity building initiatives at the Council? Are there additional needs?

Currently, capacity building programs provide funding to support organizational and professional development. There are three components and the funding is of different duration and varying foci. While all components provide support to Aboriginal Arts groups, collectives, organizations, independent art administrators, and artistic and cultural mediators for organizational and/or professional development, each component had some nuanced criteria as well.

The Flying Eagle component provides flexible, short term (up to six months) funding to support organizational and professional development with a focus on advancing effective organizational governance and management. The nature of this program was one of 'quick response' (i.e. multiple deadlines and a fast turnaround of awarding grants). The Annual Project Funding supports similar activity; however, a needs assessment was also required and organizations needed to articulate the intended impact for the organization and/or the community. Multi-year Project Funding provided support to Aboriginal arts organizations that have permanent infrastructure in place or are committed to building one. Examples of activities supported by Annual and Multi-year Project Funding include development of strategic, marketing or communications plans, board development, development of an outreach strategy, networking and new media or web-site development.

In the survey, organizations were asked how strongly they agreed or disagreed (i.e., strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree, and does not apply) with the statement:

Overall, the funding this organization/collective received through the Aboriginal Arts Program(s) helped us to develop our internal capacity (e.g., administration, marketing, publicity).

Thirty-eight percent strongly agreed and 41% agreed, for a combined total of 79% agreement.⁶ Respondents were also asked (using the same scale):

Overall, the funding this organization/collective received through the Aboriginal Arts Program(s) helped us to develop networks that support our internal capacity.

Twenty-one percent strongly agreed and 62% agreed, for a combined total of 83% agreement.⁷ Therefore, approximately 80% of organizations believed that funding through the Aboriginal Arts Program(s) had helped their organization with building their internal capacity.

Furthermore, in the File Review findings, the most frequent outcome was “Aboriginal Arts organization and artists have increased knowledge/capacity,” identified in 52% of Final Reports.

In the capacity building case study, capacity building grants were highly valued, particularly because there was an understanding of the cultural context in which Aboriginal artistic organizations operate. Many uses of the capacity building funding were identified, most frequently for administrative purposes, networking/gatherings, and marketing as well as for knowledge increase, revenue development, relationship development, outreach, mentorship, and web-site development.

Some organizations have hired external consultants with expertise to support particular projects/needs (such as assistance with developing marketing strategies), while others used the capacity building money either to help pay for their own salaries or to hire people to do the basic administrative work. Sometimes support for particular projects, such as developing strategic plans, led to the identification of other needs. In these instances, the organizations often applied for additional grants to support different capacity building needs. This appears to demonstrate a similar use of capacity building funds as other capacity building initiatives at the Canada Council.

There were suggestions that capacity building funding should be even more flexible and should recognize that organizations have different capacity building needs at different times in their evolution. Furthermore, there were ideas offered regarding

⁶ The 11 people responding ‘does not apply’ were removed along with the missing. Percentages were calculated out of a total number of 42 organizational respondents.

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more open discussion about what capacity building does and can look like for Aboriginal arts organizations. A number of the respondents explained that capacity building is not simply about providing funding to support organizational aspects, such as efficient administration, marketing, web-site creation and more organizational ability to function. Capacity also encompasses growth at various stages of organizational development, including the building of symbiotic relationships with other arts organizations. Flexibility and fluidity were viewed as the hallmarks for successful capacity building support.

6. How effective has the program delivery been between two divisions at the Council? Is the design still relevant? What is working and what is not? While application volume varies from discipline to discipline, does a low volume imply the program has exhausted its target/met the original need? Should these programs be phased out, or have the needs of the community simply shifted? How can the design of the program delivery be made more efficient and still meet the needs of these artists?⁸

According to data analyzed for the Phase 1 Report, the number of applications per programs per year increased sharply, but temporarily, with the introduction of the new dedicated programs in 2004-2005.⁹ However, by the end of the observation period in 2011-12, there were more than twice as many applications per program per year than there had been prior to the Council's engagement with Aboriginal arts in the late 1990's. This suggests that, over and above the existing upsurge in Arts funding, the Council's overall engagement in addition to the introduction of the specific programs in 2004-2005, has been successful in reaching and supporting Aboriginal artists.

In some interviews conducted for the case studies and with staff key informants, as well as in the discussions at the *Petapan* symposium, people expressed the view that Aboriginal art is not always discipline-based. This was also reflected in the survey results as both individuals (55%) and organizations (60%) most often described themselves as 'multi-disciplinary,' representing the diversity and complexity of what is viewed by Aboriginal artists as their art.

Furthermore, in the case study interviews, as well as in other lines of evidence and the feedback from *Petapan*, surfaced some tension between valuing 'traditional' artistic practice and recognizing the place of 'contemporary' art created by Aboriginal artists. This may suggest that program delivery needs to be fluid and flexible, recognizing and valuing the depth and range of Aboriginal art without imposing discipline-based distinctions or boundaries.

⁸ Due to the change in all the programs, these nuanced aspects of program delivery were not explored.

⁹ Source: Literature and Document Review, Phase 1 Report.

7. Is the organizational structure to support program delivery, services and other targeted support working effectively? What options going forward could the Council consider?

Respondents to the survey, both individuals (98%)¹⁰ and organizations/collectives (99%), believed it is important for the Canada Council to continue to have programs only for Aboriginal artists and organizations. Even those who were unsuccessful in their application believed in the importance of these programs (91%). This view was reinforced by those interviewed for both case studies. A number of those interviewed in the case studies, as well as some Canada Council staff, argued that Aboriginal artists should be viewed through a sovereignty lens, as opposed to an equity focus, which could have implications for the structure and programming provided to Aboriginal artists and arts organizations by the Canada Council.

In the various lines of evidence, many respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the notion of discipline-based funding, as it was seen as coming from a Western Eurocentric paradigm not appropriate to Aboriginal ways of knowing.

At the moment, the Canada Council for the Arts is in the process moving towards a non-disciplinary program design; according to many of those interviewed in the course of the evaluation, this will be a welcome evolution.

Our aim is to arm the Council with less than ten major national, non-disciplinary programs that cover all fields of artistic practice and its outreach in Canada and the world, and that take into account the specific issues of current arts disciplines and emerging art forms.

Source: Speech given by Simon Brault, Director and CEO, Canada Council for the Arts, Annual Public Meeting, January 2015.

8. Are the Aboriginal Arts Programs delivered in a cost effective manner?¹¹

Comparison to other programs within the Canada Council showed that in 2013-14, on average per application, Aboriginal Arts individual and organization project grants cost more to deliver than other Canada Council individual and organization project grants. When examining costs per grant awarded findings were similar. Administrative costs were also higher. However, there are a number of cautions and explanatory factors to be considered. Possible explanatory factors include bias due to the cost estimation methodology, differences in success rates, grant size and unique challenges faced by Aboriginal artists and organizations.

¹⁰ Percentages are calculated with the “don’t know” category taken out.

¹¹ The Phase 3 Report presents the methodology and a detailed discussion of results and explanatory factors relating to the operational efficiency and delivery of Canada Council’s Aboriginal Arts programs.

Overall, the results of this operational efficiency analysis suggest that the Council's dedicated Aboriginal Arts programs appear to be less operationally efficient in terms of costs of delivering each grant, than other comparable Canada Council programs. They also appear to be less efficient in terms of the proportion of resources that is spent on administration versus direct grants. The reasons for this are not clear: while the set of programs appears to be enjoying stable demand and stable success rates, it is also true that both the success rate and grant size, especially for organization project grants, are higher than for the Council as a whole.

Taken together, this means that per dollar requested in applications, more grants and larger grants are awarded. Assuming that the staff workload is equivalent across programs, for an equivalent number of applications, it could be posited that programs with a higher success rate and larger average grant size will potentially need more staff and other resources to support program delivery, as they will be managing both more money and more grantees. However, this remains hypothetical. These factors are hard to disentangle but could be contributing to an appearance of lower efficiency for the Aboriginal Arts programs. Coupled with the unique challenges identified above, these factors may be converging to decrease apparent operational efficiency of the dedicated Aboriginal Arts programs relative to those of Council as a whole. On the other hand, an alternative viewpoint on this result is that it reflects a deliberately higher investment in and increased engagement of Aboriginal artists and organizations, in order to ensure the program success that has been demonstrated in the other lines of evidence of this evaluation.

Regardless of the interpretation of these findings, the inherent limitations and exploratory nature of these analyses should be kept in mind. These observations should best be considered hypothesis-generators rather than evaluation findings.

D. Conclusions and Recommendations

This section presents the overall conclusions from the evaluation, with supporting commentary and corresponding recommendations. The evaluators recognize that the Canada Council is in a process of change and re-structuring and, as such, this environment has been taken into account when framing the evidence-based recommendations.

1. Evidence is strong regarding the importance of dedicated programs to Aboriginal artists/organizations.

For both artists and organizations, dedicated programs were viewed as important. Artists indicated they were able to use grants to find dedicated time for art-making and 'space' where cultural expression was valued. Organizations valued the funding to support the development of capacity and knowledge sharing. Survey respondents

also strongly supported dedicated programs often because dedicated programs provide a 'space' where Aboriginal artists/organizations could be culturally understood and their unique qualities valued. Those interviewed for the case studies and key informants within Canada Council also spoke to the cultural importance of dedicated programs. Across the various lines of evidence the importance of dedicated programs in supporting cultural sovereignty was also raised. Given the historical context and current climate regarding truth and reconciliation, what role does Canada Council's support of Aboriginal artists/organizations have to play in supporting a 'reconciliation' or redress stance? This represents an issue to internal Council consideration and dialogue.

Recommendation: *Reorganization at Canada Council needs to ensure the continuation or creation of 'unique spaces' for Aboriginal artists/organizations.*

2. Aboriginal art-making is not well served through a discipline-based lens.

Multiple lines of evidence indicate that a discipline-based approach does not serve many Aboriginal artists or organizations well. A discipline-based approach to art-making is grounded in a Western perspective or construct. Therefore, it could be argued applying a discipline-based approach to the funding of Aboriginal art-making is a colonizing structure that flies in the face of Aboriginal cultural sovereignty and Aboriginal artists/organizations' desire (and even their right) to determine their own course in art-making.¹²

The issue of support for traditional Aboriginal art-making arose through several lines of evidence. Traditional art-making occupies a link to a distinct Indigenous art history and should not be conflated with a Westernized 'art versus craft' polarization; a further manifestation of the Western discipline-based approach.

Some interviewed for the case studies believed that Aboriginal art is 'urban-centric.' Would greater attention to traditional art-making provide more support to artists in rural and remote communities? Suggestions were also made during key informant interviews that traditional art-making might be the only art-making expression in some rural/remote communities. Could traditional art be in jeopardy through loss of traditional knowledge? Does Canada Council have a role to play in cultural reclamation through enhanced support for traditional art-making, while still supporting and valuing contemporary expressions of Aboriginal art?¹³

¹² While Aboriginal artists/organizations often describe themselves as multi-disciplinary, this may also be true for other artists who are pushing the envelope of traditional arts disciplines.

¹³ Currently the Canada Council supports what is viewed as traditional art making through programs such as the Aboriginal Traditional Art Making Program (Visual Arts) and the Elder Youth Legacy Program.

Recommendation: *Canada Council's support to Aboriginal artists/organizations should not be done primarily through a discipline-based or multi-disciplinary¹⁴ lens. Rather, unique approaches to supporting Aboriginal art-making that recognize both the heritage and future of Aboriginal art should be enhanced within Canada Council.*

3. The importance of capacity-building was affirmed.

Evidence from the web survey and the case study interviews indicates that Canada Council support for capacity building was valued and that it had supported outcomes related to the Pathway's four quadrants. Suggestions were made that the definition of capacity building could be expanded allowing for even more flexible funding.

Recommendation: *Canada Council continue to support capacity building for Aboriginal artists and artist organizations while ensuring a broad and flexible definition of capacity building.*

4. Continued support for collaboration between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal artists/organizations is warranted.

Examples of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal artists/organizations working together as a result of Canada Council support emerged in various lines of evidence. However, this was not a frequently identified activity and there were concerns that partnerships were not always equal. Those interviewed for the capacity building cases study definitely saw an enhanced role for the Canada Council in supporting the development and implementation of collaborative opportunities.

Recommendation: *Canada Council continue to encourage and support collaboration and equal partnerships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal artists/organizations.*

5. Comparison of dedicated Aboriginal programs to other 'mainstream; programs on the basis of 'efficiency' can be problematic.

While the 'efficiency' of dedicated Aboriginal programs can be compared with that of 'mainstream' or non-dedicated programs, the results require important contextual considerations. Given the other findings that Aboriginal art-making deserves a distinct approach and should not be considered through a Western lens, coupled with the distinct challenges faced by Aboriginal artists/organizations, an 'efficiency' comparison between these does not take into account current and historical realities or acknowledge the cultural importance of Aboriginal art-making. On the other hand, an alternative viewpoint on the examination of efficiency is that it helps to confirm

¹⁴ It is important to keep in mind that 'multi-disciplinary' is still within a Westernized discipline-based perspective.

that a deliberately higher investment in Aboriginal artists and organizations by the Council has contributed to ensure the program success that has been demonstrated in the other lines of evidence of this evaluation.

Recommendation: *That the results of the efficiency comparison included in this evaluation be viewed through the lens of a higher investment and engagement contributing to the achievement of the articulated outcomes.*

6. Findings from this evaluation have surfaced areas for further inquiry.

- **Underserved populations:** Multiple lines of evidence suggest that there are likely underserved populations within the broad category of Aboriginal artists/organizations. These appear to include those in rural/remote communities, those whose language of communication is French or an Aboriginal language, those who practice more traditional art-making (possibly Elders), and Aboriginal artists/organizations from certain geographic regions, such as Atlantic Canada. Complicating issues may include distance and isolation, lack of opportunities, and lack of infrastructure,

Recommendation: *Canada Council should engage in further inquiry regarding the nature and extent of possible underserved populations.*

- **One-time applicants:** There appears to be a high number of one-time applicants to Aboriginal programs. How do the number of one-time applicants to Aboriginal programs compare to the number of one-time applicants to non-Aboriginal programs? What is the difference between one-time applicants who identify as Aboriginal and those who do not? While some comparisons have been done, the reasons why a proportion of Aboriginal applicants only apply once are not clear.

Recommendation: *Canada Council should engage in further inquiry regarding the characteristics of one-time Aboriginal applicants and their reasons for not applying a second time.*

- **Peers:** The question of who are 'peers' for Aboriginal artists surfaced a number of times during the evaluation. A few people noted that the situation regarding who are 'peers' becomes further complicated when addressing traditional arts. This also leads to speculation as to whether, for Aboriginal artists, Council's peer assessment process is always culturally appropriate.

Recommendation: *Canada Council should engage in conversations with Aboriginal artists regarding issues related to peers and the peer assessment process.*