

Ontario Association  
of Art Galleries  
(OAAG) for the  
PASO Coalition

# Models of Collective Arts Advocacy

## Final Report

Case Studies and  
Analysis

June 2015



**ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL**  
**CONSEIL DES ARTS DE L'ONTARIO**  
an Ontario government agency  
un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario

Provincial Arts Service  
Organization of Ontario



Organisation Provinciale de  
Services aux Arts de l'Ontario

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**Table of Contents**

<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>CASE STUDIES</b>	<b>4</b>
LE MOUVEMENT POUR LES ARTS ET LES LETTRES (LE MAL)	<b>4</b>
THE CANADIAN ARTS COALITION	<b>8</b>
ONTARIO PASO COALITION	<b>13</b>
VISUAL ARTS ALLIANCE	<b>16</b>
BEAUTIFUL CITY	<b>19</b>
LA TABLE DES ORGANISMES NATIONAUX EN ARTS ET CULTURE (LA TONAC)	<b>21</b>
OTTAWA CULTURAL ALLIANCE	<b>23</b>
<b>ANALYSIS</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>TOWARD A WORKING MODEL</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>APPENDIX 1: LIST OF INTERVIEWEES</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>APPENDIX 2: QUESTIONNAIRE</b>	<b>28</b>

## Objectives

The Ontario Association of Art Galleries (OAAG), on behalf of a collective of Provincial Arts Service Organizations in Ontario (PASO Coalition), seeks to deepen its understanding of various ASO-led advocacy initiatives. As such, they commissioned a comparative analysis of a number of ASO-led advocacy initiatives.

Stemming from this overarching objective, our mandate was to:

- Compile case studies of various models and approaches to collaborative advocacy;
- Provide analysis of the costs and resources invested in each model;
- Track outcomes and, in particular, the benefits of each initiative;
- Describe differences and commonalities between models;
- Identify success factors and best practices.

## Methodology

Firstly, in concert with OAGG leadership, we targeted a short list of collective advocacy initiatives/groups. We subsequently identified leaders who had played key roles within each of the targeted initiatives/groups. We designed a semi-directed interview protocol, conceived to set a basic timeline for each initiative, establish an operating model, define leadership, collaborative and operating models, document costs and resources required and identify factors for success.

We then conducted 12 telephone interviews with key stakeholders, each of whom has been involved with one or more of the targeted advocacy initiatives. Interviewees were conducted in both English and French with interviewees based in Toronto (6), Ottawa (3), Montreal (2) and London (1)

Concurrently, whenever such resources were available, we undertook a review of online documentation pertaining to the targeted initiatives/groups. In some cases, interviewees shared internal documents to further enrich our analysis.

Based on the interviews and available online resources, we have compiled a series of case studies of various models for collective advocacy in the arts, in Canada. Each case study provides an overview of the given initiative's history, defining activities; leadership and governance; inner workings and principle outcomes. Based on these case studies, we have examined cost-benefit, and outlined various factors for success that constitute a winning model or approach to collective advocacy, in our opinion.

## Case Studies

### ***Le Mouvement pour les arts et les lettres (Le MAL)***

[www.mal.qc.ca](http://www.mal.qc.ca)

#### Overview

Le MAL was established in 1999, just a few years after the creation of the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec (CALQ). At the time, the Québec government had launched a Commission on Arts and Culture in order to better define the roles of both CALQ (the province's principal source of provincial funding for artists and arts organizations) and SODEQ (the province's principal instrument supporting cultural industries). A number of organizations representing dance, music, theatre, literature and visual and media arts organized in order to ensure that they had a common discourse during the Commission's consultations. Since its creation, CALQ's budget had been flat lined at approximately \$45 million. Le MAL was formed with a single goal in mind: to increase CALQ's budget. This continues to be MAL's primary objective today (CALQ's budget currently stands at just over \$100 million). Le MAL has also played a significant role in advocating the Federal government for additional arts funding through the Canada Council and been supportive of municipal advocacy efforts in Montreal and Québec city.

Le MAL speaks on behalf of thousands of artists, cultural workers and arts organizations throughout Québec. Its core is a consortium of 9 member organizations, representing dance, music, visual and media arts, literature and cultural development (*Centres régionaux de la culture*). Several organizations that had been involved when MAL was first established have since parted ways with the consortium (CQT, UNEQ, RAAV). These organizations have opted to advocate independently, and to work exclusively on discipline-specific issues.

Le MAL invests considerable time and energy to raise the public and media profile of the cultural sector in Québec. The organization's spokesperson is frequently called upon to respond and react to Québécois cultural policy decisions. MAL does not, however, play an active role in broader political issues and campaigns in Québec, in stark contrast to several other well-known member-based organizations (UDA, UNEQ). As such, they Le MAL has managed to avoid potentially acrimonious relationships with political parties and elected officials. MAL's approach has been consistent since its inception: members do not request separate pieces of the pie... rather, they collectively advocate for a larger pie.

Every year, le MAL meets with a number of elected officials. These meetings may include an overarching ask, but are primarily intended to demystify the unique nature of an arts council for elected officials and their senior staff. Meetings are more akin to information sessions than to pitch sessions, and have been invaluable to building increased understanding of the needs and realities of the arts community over the long-term while also allowing MAL to develop trust-based ties with individual candidates, elected officials, political staff and senior bureaucrats.

### Key Initiatives

- **Protests in Québec city:** In response to the Federal government's cut of international touring programs in 2008, le MAL mobilized thousands of artists, cultural workers and patrons of the arts to march in Québec, in front of *l'Assemblée nationale*. This called attention to the impact of the recent cuts for Québécois artists and arts organizations.
- ***Journée des arts à l'Assemblée nationale* :** In 2014, le MAL convened an Arts Day in Québec city, to highlight the importance of CALQ as a public partner and funder of the arts community.
- **Regional tours:** From one year to the next, MAL meets with elected officials from regions beyond Montreal and Québec city, in their ridings. MAL reimburses travel and per diem costs for staff and board chairs of their member organizations who attend these meetings.
- **Communications:** MAL frequently reacts to Québec and Federal cultural policy announcements through press releases and interviews.
- **Pre-budget brief:** Every year, MAL takes part in pre-budget consultations and presents a brief to Québec's Finance Committee. MAL also attends the annual budget lockup, every year, and ensures that its membership has timely insights on arts news in the Budget.

### Leadership

While most of Le MAL's strategy, messaging and logistical work is done by the executive directors of member organizations, an individual artist with significant public profile is selected to act as spokesperson. This is a means of attracting greater media attention, and of deflecting any negative press or political attention from the member organizations.

Chairs of member organizations attend at least one Le MAL membership meeting per year, to get a sense of the group dynamics and synergies created

through the consensus building process. Chairs also take an active role in advocacy meetings with MPAs.

Though several members of Le MAL have come and gone over time, leadership has remained consistent over the past decade. As of today, the future relationship between MAL and CQM is somewhat uncertain given that the organization's long-time ED will be retiring in the fall.

### Inner workings

Le MAL is not an organization, nor does it have a steering committee. Decisions are made by consensus, during member meetings, held in person in Montreal, every three weeks throughout the year and weekly during peak times. The communications committee oversees the work of the external communications firm (drafting and vetting press releases, pre-budget brief, etc.) and ensures that Le MAL's messaging is in phase with that of each of its members.

Le MAL works with its communications firm to set a yearly action plan. This provides a basic framework for all advocacy work (meetings, campaigns, communications, etc.) While the yearly plan provides a roadmap for the year, interviewees stated that one of Le MAL's greatest strengths has been its ability to respond to issues that arise spontaneously, throughout the year, and that had not been anticipated in advance.

The external communications firm produces reports for each of Le MAL's activities (meetings, etc.) These reports give a clearer indication of the impact of advocacy efforts, track political priorities and traction for MAL's asks over time. Reports are internal, and shared only with EDs of member organizations. EDs do not share these reports with their respective boards. As such, the scope and volume of activity Le MAL undertakes would be unclear to the average board member of one of Le MAL's member organizations. Nonetheless, interviewees confirm that their boards are extremely supportive of the time and resources they invest in Le MAL's work, as they clearly perceive the benefits.

### Time and money

Member organizations contribute to Le MALs operating costs through dues ranging from \$5K to \$19K per organization. Le MAL's total yearly revenues vary from \$60K to \$100K. Organizations contribute more in an election year. Larger organizations show their contribution as a line item in their operating expenses. Contributions are proportional to organizational capacity. Organizations with budgets of less than \$1 million contribute roughly 50% of what their larger counterparts chip-in. For several years, "Participation in collective action" has been one of CALQ's assessment criteria for service organizations. As such,

members do not hesitate to report advocacy activity, or to clearly identify the cost of this activity in their reports to funders and yearly audit.

Le MAL has one part-time employee, responsible for logistics and communications, who works 30 hours per month for Le Mal, and part-time for the *Conseil Québécois de la musique* (CQM). CQM provides meeting space, administrative and accounting services for the MAL, coordinates by-weekly membership meetings and manages the contract with the strategic communications firm retained by Le MAL.

Members spend roughly 5 hours per month in meetings, and estimate they contribute roughly one day per month to MAL activities during peak times (pre-budget consultations, election campaigns, etc.) The CQM estimates that their ED spends 3 to 4 weeks a year providing accounting and coordination for le MAL. The strategic communications firm MAL retains from one year to the next provide approximately 200 hours of service and support throughout the year (scheduling meetings, drafting and revising press releases and briefing notes, working on messaging and scripts for advocacy meetings, etc.)

### Significant Outcomes

- \$21 million permanent increase to CALQ's base funding (over 3 years);
- Significantly raised the profile of artists and arts organizations vis-à-vis cultural industries;
- Ongoing ties to the office of the Minister of Culture and with senior staff and elected officials in a range of ministries and departments;
- Increased ties among organizations serving different disciplines and built solidarity among Executive Directors of various service organizations;
- Ongoing ties between arts service organizations and cultural development organizations working at the municipal level;
- Increased awareness, among elected officials, of the role, mandate, nature and benefits of arts councils;
- Strong, ongoing, ties with senior leadership at CALQ. Le MAL maintains frequent contact and ongoing dialogue with CALQ's CEO.

## The Canadian Arts Coalition

[www.canadianartscoalition.com](http://www.canadianartscoalition.com)

@artscoalitionca

### Overview

The Coalition was born as a result of a meeting, convened in confidence by leadership of the Canada Council for the Arts. At the time, Canada Council's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary was fast approaching, and the Federal government had hinted the timing might be ripe to make a case for increased funding. Canada Council therefore sought to make a case that demonstrated community support. Canada Council leadership shared this information with those in attendance, and promptly departed the meeting in order to allow the ASOs, arts organizations and leaders in attendance to strategize and devise a course of action of their own accord. At the time, the Canadian Conference of the Arts did not have the confidence of those in attendance. It was felt that some other, non-organization-based, driver of collective action should take the lead in support of positioning the ask for increased funding for Canada Council.

From the beginning, Coalition membership was largely an assemblage of arts service organizations across disciplines, and other key advocates and membership-based arts organizations (i.e.: Le MAL, the Arts Summit, etc.) While the Coalition has, at times, purported to be the largest collection of arts supporters in Canada (thereby echoing a highly effective theme voiced by Americans for the Arts) its paying membership numbers only approximately 20 organizations.

Though the particulars of the ask have varied over time (\$50 million for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary; doubling the budget; bringing the budget to \$300 million over several years; incremental increases in the lead-up to 2017), requesting new funds for the Canada Council has remained central to the Coalition's ongoing efforts. Indeed, this has been the foundation of consensus within the Coalition, from the start.

Over time, additional asks have come and gone (renewing a suite of programs at Canadian Heritage, increasing Canada's artistic presence throughout the world, etc.) The slow but sure downfall and disappearance of the Canadian Conference of the Arts placed increased pressure on the Coalition to advocate for a broader range of issues as of 2011-2012.



## Key Initiatives:

- **Arts Day on the Hill:** Each year, the Coalition convenes over 100 artists, cultural workers, patrons and other key stakeholders for a series of advocacy meetings with MPs on Parliament Hill. Participants are briefed and coached by Coalition leadership and a lobby and communications firm and subsequently work in teams to pitch the Coalition's asks to MPs.
- **Pre-budget brief:** The Coalition's asks are revised, debated and articulated annually, and submitted to the Federal government through the Standing Committee on Finance's pre-budget consultation process.
- **Federal Budget Analysis:** In the years since the demise of the Canadian Conference of the Arts, the Coalition has partnered with the Conference's former leadership, and the Saskatchewan Arts Board, to produce an analysis of the Federal Budget from an arts perspective. This provides ongoing tracking of Federal support, an important source of documentation for arts organizations that advocate for federal funding from one year to the next.
- **Arts 308:** In 2013, the Coalition coordinated a national campaign to encourage arts leaders to meet with their MP at the riding level, in order to connect Federal arts advocacy messaging with local issues, needs and success stories.
- **The Alternative Federal Budget:** In 2013, following discussions with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and leadership of the former Canadian Conference of the Arts, the Coalition authored a chapter on Arts and Culture for the Alternative Federal Budget.

## Leadership

The Coalition's work is spearheaded by a national steering committee, comprised of 6-8 representatives from various member groups. Historically, two members of the steering committee have acted as co-chairs and one of these co-chairs has always been Francophone, thereby acknowledging the Coalition's efforts to represent the arts community working in both of Canada's official languages.

At inception and for the first 3 years of its existence, Micheline McKay and Anne-Marie Jean acted as co-chairs. There was a vacuum of leadership for approximately 18 months, until new co-chairs were elected by Coalition members in the autumn of 2009. Katherine Carleton and Eric Dubeau co-chaired for approximately 4 years. Kate Cornell was acting chair for a period of several months, and co-chaired with Carmen Gibbs in 2014. At present, Kate Cornell

continues to chair, and the search is on to recruit a Francophone co-chair. It is noteworthy that the steering committee has worked through significant turnover during the past year and that many political relationships have had to be rebuilt from the ground up.

Within the Coalition's operating model, co-chairs have taken on a significant share of workload, acting as spokespeople, but also convening meetings, drafting and revising documents, managing projects, etc. As such, when there has been a change at the co-chair level, the Coalition has lost considerable organizational capacity and effectiveness. Leadership transitions have also proved trying because precious little about the inner workings of the Coalition has been set to paper. There are few records of meetings, no documentation of the decision-making process, relationships with key decision makers, etc. Changes in leadership therefore also trigger a loss of organizational memory.

#### Inner workings:

The Coalition is not incorporated, nor does it have any formal or legal status as an organization. Rather, it acts as a *front commun* for members who seek to maintain awareness of Federal arts funding issues and to advocate for one or all of the Coalition's asks. Given this status, the Coalition cannot open a corporate account nor can it receive grants from public funders. For many years, Magazines Canada has provided accounting services for the Coalition, and managed its funds.

The Coalition has no staff, but retains contract help (logistics and lobbying) for the organization of Hill Day, contracts the Federal Budget Analysis and frequently benefits from the work of communications staff of its member organizations, notably CARFAC, FCCF and le MAL. The Coalition's secretariat has been taken on by one or more member organizations through the years (Orchestras Canada, FCCF, Canadian Dance Assembly).

Members of the steering committee ensure the success of Coalition activities by sharing workload. Most members of the steering committee chair at least one of the Coalition's standing committees. The Coalition's current standing committees are:

- Membership: tasked with recruiting new members, collecting dues and managing the Coalition's database.
- Communications: update and manage the Coalition's website, prepare and distribute press releases, post and manage the Coalition's social media.
- Research and policy: frame the Coalition's asks, draft the yearly brief to the Standing Committee on Finance, coordinate analysis of the Federal Budget.
- Election: preparing for the upcoming Federal election.

Over the past year, committees have met – by phone conference – an average of once every 6 to 8 weeks, for 60 to 90 minutes. An email chain facilitates ongoing contact amongst members of the Steering Committee. The Coalition has held one face-to-face meeting per year, the eve of the Canada Council's NASO meeting.

Among the particular challenges to the Coalition's work, interviewees stated that determining the exact nature of the asks, from one year to the next, has proven taxing at times. While there continues to be widespread consensus for an ask for increased funding for the Canada Council, membership is less unanimous regarding other asks. Interviewees agreed there has been greater traction and impact with a clear, focused message. They felt increasing the number of asks to broaden the base of supporters for the Coalition would be contentious.

Differing approaches to advocacy in French and English Canada is also an ongoing issue. Ensuring that everyone who takes part in a phone conference has a shared understanding of what is said and wordsmithing documents in both languages continue to be challenging.

### Time and money

Initially, service organizations funded by Canada Council received a supplemental grant equivalent to 10% of their previous operating grant, for "national advocacy initiatives". This funding was provided on the understanding that it would be directed to Coalition activities, and by extension, to making a case for increased funding for Canada Council. This was not an ideal model, as several recipient organizations did not appreciate such a directive approach and made use of the supplement to other ends.

Today, the Coalition suggests a basic membership contribution of \$500 per organization. Many contribute less (\$100 to \$250) while steering committee members donate significantly larger amounts and cover the costs of phone conferencing services, over and above their basic membership.

Over the first few years, the Coalition's annual budget totalled approximately \$150K. Over the past 7 years, the Coalition's yearly budget has averaged between \$20K to \$25K. Ongoing operating expenditures are minimal, and covered by membership dues and supplemental contributions from organizations that see the impact of the Coalition's work.

Over and above hard costs of the Coalition's work, co-chairs contribute 2-3 days per month to the Coalition, throughout the year. Secretariat organizations contribute 6 to 8 weeks of work on the part of 2 or 3 staff for the organization of

Hill Day. Members of the steering committee contribute roughly one half-day per month to Coalition business.

Initially, the majority of the Coalition's funding was used to retain the services of a lobbying and communications firm. This continues to be a major expense for the Coalition today, though the cost has decreased considerably over time (\$10K to \$15K). Over the past seven years, the entirety of the lobbying firm's fees has been borne by the Arts Summit. Other significant costs are the production of the Federal Budget analysis by an Ottawa based researcher.

### Significant Outcomes

- Maintaining funding to Canada Council throughout the recession. At a time when every other Federal cultural agency was being cut, the budget of the Canada Council was preserved.
- Increased ties between ASOs throughout the country. While some ASOs had worked together in the past on discipline or regionally-specific issues, there were few ties between ASOs across disciplines or in regions throughout the country. The Coalition has contributed to increased collaboration and helped to build trust among organizations and leaders that had no previous experience working with each other. Interviewees stated that the Coalition had significantly reinforced trust among ASOs working in different disciplines and different regions.
- Ready access to leadership at Canada Council. Ties between Coalition leaders (particularly co-chairs) and senior staff at the Canada Council have increased significantly. While Canada Council has never shaped the Coalition's messaging, it has commented on the timeliness of the Coalition's asks. Also, while taking care to respect the confidentiality of communications with the Ministry of Canadian Heritage or to Treasury Board, Canada Council has worked with Coalition leadership to ensure that campaigns led by the arts community were aligned with in-house program and operating reviews. Members of the Steering Committee meet with the CEO of Canada Council on a yearly basis, and maintain frequent contact with Canada Council through the Director of Arts Disciplines' office.
- Increased profile for Coalition co-chairs and their organizations. Coalition co-chairs have benefited from increased media and political profiles. Interviewees mentioned that it was easier for them to gain access to senior bureaucrats and MPs to advocate on behalf of their respective organizations because of their roles within the Coalition.

## Ontario PASO Coalition

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/PASO-OPSA/134890963273401>

### Overview

Established in 2006-2007, the PASO Coalition emerged at a time of stagnant public funding for the arts in Ontario. The Ontario Arts Council (OAC) convened a meeting of ASOs to discuss making a case for increased funding for the OAC. At the time, colleagues at various ASOs had few ties and relationships across disciplines. It became clear that no organization, including the OAC, had the mandate or capacity to single-handedly undertake substantial advocacy for increased public investment in the arts in Ontario. The PASO Coalition was devised to bring various ASOs together, help EDs of various ASOs to connect with and learn from each other, on even footing.

Previous iterations of a forum for collective advocacy existed prior to a wave of massive cuts to public investments in the arts under the Harris government. Since that time (96-97), service organizations and the overall arts sector had been working to maintain essential services and activities. Re-establishing political ties and reinforcing collective capacity for advocacy recently emerged as a priority.

The PASO Coalition connects 23 service organizations representing artists and arts organizations in all disciplines, working in both English and French, throughout Ontario. A core of 8 to 10 organizations are most active within the Coalition. Members are primarily based in Toronto, but also in Ottawa and London. In contrast to most other collective advocacy initiatives in this report, certain networks of performing arts presenters are members of the PASO Coalition.

### Key Initiatives

- Dialogue with the OAC: The PASO Coalition has established ties with the CEO, Director of Granting Programs and a number of Officers at the OAC. Meetings with senior leadership are held on a yearly basis.
- Response to ministerial mandate letters: When the newly elected Wynne government circulated mandate letters for each ministry in 2014-15, the PASO Coalition leveraged this opportunity to respond to several letters, position the importance of increased arts funding, and request meetings with a number of Ministers and senior staff. Through this process, they were able to meet with the Minister of Culture and with the Premier's office.

- Arts Day at Queen's Park: The PASO Coalition has encouraged its members to participate in this event, coordinated by the OAC. The Coalition has also endeavoured to inform and broaden messaging for the event, to better reflect the need for increased public funding for the arts rather than an ask targeted exclusively at the OAC.

### Leadership

Jewell Goodwyn, initiated the PASO Coalition as a result of her experience with le MAL, in response to a tenuous relationship between PASOs and the OAC and to stagnant public funding for the arts in Ontario. The EDs of several other ASOs were instrumental and essential to the emergence of a lasting coalition. A formalized co-chair model was established 3 years ago with the EDs of OAAG and CARFAC-Ontario sharing workload and responsibilities.

There have been a significant number of transitions at the ED level of member-organizations (8 new EDs over the past year). This has underlined the need to document the PASO Coalition's actions and processes in order to establish and maintain organizational memory over the long-term. A leadership transition is in the offing, as the current co-chairs will both be leaving their current positions over the coming months.

### Inner workings

Though the PASO Coalition has no full-time staff, an intern working 2 days per week, and managed jointly by OAAG and CARFAC Ontario, provided some administrative support between January and April 2015.

Co-chairs set the agenda for monthly meetings and workload is distributed among members according to interest and availability. Co-chairs take on the brunt of the work for document preparation and advocacy meetings.

The PASO Coalition has a website for internal use and is currently developing a revamped site that will be accessible to the public. A listserv, provided by Folk Ontario, is used to facilitate contact among members. The PASO Coalition currently lacks a number of guiding documents, such as a multi-year vision or plan.

### Time and Money

The PASO Coalition has, on occasion, accessed project funding from OAC through applications that have been sponsored by one or more organizational members. Though members do not pay dues as such to the PASO Coalition, they have been called upon to provide matching contributions for specific

projects. All told, cash contributions from members total no more than \$5,000 per year, though in-kind contributions are markedly more substantial.

The founding chair estimates that 25% to 30% of her working time was dedicated to the PASO Coalition over the first 18 months of its existence. All told, it is estimated that co-chairs have contributed \$120,000 in time to the PASO Coalition since it was founded (roughly \$15K per year, in-kind contributions). Current co-chairs estimate that they contribute 10 to 20 hours per month to the PASO Coalition.

Members contribute additional time for monthly phone meetings (estimated at between 2 and 10 hours each per month, depending on the various tasks they take on) and share the costs (approximately 350\$ per year in total) of conferencing services.

### Significant Outcomes

- A learning community and community of practice for EDs to strategize and share best practices about advocacy;
- Increased dialogue with and respect from OAC and decision makers within government;
- Increased capacity and expertise to analyse government budgeting documents;
- Increased expertise and experience building and working from consensus;
- Shared learning opportunities around themes such as leadership, advocacy, governance and management.

## Visual Arts Alliance

[www.visualartsvisuels.ca](http://www.visualartsvisuels.ca)

### Overview

In 2007, the Canadian Museum Association convened a visual arts summit conceived to provide a sector-wide forum for dialogue around long-term issues. A number of visual and media arts organizations had been mobilized to be a part of the organizing committee for the Summit. This marked a rare opportunity for visual arts ASOs working across the country, in both English and French, to gather around the same table and work together. At the end of the Summit, organizations felt compelled to build on the strong foundation for collaboration they had established and continue to act on the agenda for sector development that had been central to discussions during the Summit. The first meeting of the Visual Arts Alliance was held in January 2008.

The following agenda for the Visual Arts Summit, first established in 2007, continues to be the basis for the VAA's collective action today:

- To satisfy the public's growing demand for participation in visual culture;
- To communicate the sector's needs with a united voice;
- To provide a secure livelihood for artists;
- To acknowledge the varied cultures of the indigenous peoples of this land;
- To reflect the diversity of our society; and
- To strengthen the institutions that advance the visual arts.

Currently, 13 organizations are members of the VAA. They include service organizations and member based organizations (i.e.: for educators, gallery directors, etc.)

### Key Initiatives

- Long-term research plan: One of the key consensus points from the Visual Art Summit was that additional research was required in order to better document issues, needs, trends and the state of the field within the visual arts community. It was felt that this was an integral part of the process whereby the sector would be able to make to decision makers and improve the socio-economic situation of artists over the long-term. VAA members conceived a multi-year research program that would increase the understanding of the visual arts sector in Canada.
- Bellavance report: In order to establish ties between various research objectives, and as a preliminary step to before initiating new research



projects, the VAA commissioned a literature review to identify existing research on the visual arts in Canada, and research gaps. The study also included a critical review and analysis of existing research. The study was directed by Dr Guy Bellavance at the *Institut national de la recherche scientifique* (INRS-Institut Armand Frappier).

- Kingston Colloquium: In order to enable VAA members to reconnect in person, and to mark the 70th anniversary of the Kingston Conference, an event that led to the launch of the Massey-Lévesque Commission and ultimately to the creation of the Canada Council for the Arts, the VAA organized an important gathering in Kingston in 2011.
- Visual arts briefing note: In an effort to better inform decision makers, and particularly senior bureaucrats and elected officials at the Federal level, the VAA has developed a two-page briefing note on the visual arts sector, its issues, needs and opportunities. This briefing note is frequently used as a calling card by VAA members when they advocate for public funding for their organizations or for the sector overall.

### Leadership

The VAA has implemented a rotating chair/secretariat model with several member organizations alternating as chair and providing administrative & logistical services. These mandates vary from 1 to 2 years, depending on organizational capacity. To date, 4 different organizations have taken a shift as chair/secretariat.

One organization, AGAVF, has acted as the VAA's treasurer since inception.

### Inner workings

In principle, the VAA operates on a collaborative/cooperative model. In reality, while all members contribute time, the onus of ensuring that the work plan continues to be acted upon rests squarely with the current chair.

Members connect by phone conference once per month and in person once per year.

### Time and Money

Members contribute dues in the amount of \$500 per year to the VAA. The consortiums ongoing activities (website, phone conferences, a yearly face-to-face meeting) cost approximately \$6,000 per year. Due to the success of the

2011 Kingston Colloquium, the VAA has a modest working capital reserve, equivalent to the cost of roughly one year's operations.

The VAA has been able to access funding from the Canada Council for its larger activities (Summit & Colloquium) through grants managed by member organizations.

The Bellavance report, which was a massive, multi-year undertaking, cost \$11,000. The VAA was able to identify a researcher who was keen to do the work, and donated considerable time, in order to ensure the study met the VAA's needs and surpassed their expectations.

Chairs contribute 2 to 3 days per month to the VAA, largely to communications with member organizations, logistics for phone conferences and management of ongoing projects. Members contribute approximately one half day per month to phone conferences and correspondence.

### Significant Outcomes

- Increased research on the visual arts in Canada. The development of a multi-year research program is, without a doubt, a tremendous step forward. Making a case for the visual arts – often lesser known than their performing arts counterparts – is predicated on having a solid base of data.
- Ongoing peer-to-peer learning opportunities. Members have stated that the VAA is a great platform to learn about their sector, particularly for a new ED. Having ready access to experienced peers is a real benefit for organizations that are implementing a succession plan, and are hoping to rapidly ramp-up new leadership.
- Increased dialogue with Canada Council regarding sector-wide issues and priorities. Having a sector-wide consortium has helped to better articulate needs in the visual arts community and helped establish deeper relationships with leadership at Canada Council, thereby helping to better position the sector vis-à-vis this important partner.

## Beautiful City

[www.beautifulcity.ca](http://www.beautifulcity.ca)

### Overview

During Creative City Youth Consultations in 2001, arts leaders proposed that the city of Toronto implement a fee on billboard ads and direct the revenues from this new tax to funding the arts throughout the city. Over the next decade, more than 60 organizations joined the Beautiful City Alliance and thousands of Torontonians signed petitions and supported the billboard tax initiative.

The campaign was particularly successful in its ability to mobilize a broad base in support of its work through social media. A range of arts organizations and other not-for-profits working for community development took part in the campaign. A website, advocacy toolkit and Facebook page were all instrumental parts of the initiative's approach. Campaign leaders were also extremely adept at developing ties with individual Councillors and city staff over time, in order to build a stronger case and gain widespread support for the tax. Beautiful City succeeded because of an unfailing ability to build and demonstrate buy-in for the proposal, throughout the prolonged process.

The city of Toronto has made a five-year commitment to funding the arts with the help of the billboard tax. That commitment will be coming to an end in 2015. Ensuring that implementation of the new Billboard Tax coincided with City Council's commitment to raise municipal arts funding to 25\$ per capita was key.

### Key Initiatives

- Youth participation in City of Toronto's Town Hall Consultations (2009);
- Documenting public support through Environics and EKOS reports (2007, 2009);
- City Council passes billboard bylaw and tax (2009);
- City Council passes motion to increase per capita arts funding to 25\$ (2010);
- Ontario Court of Appeals upholds the billboard tax (2012);
- Supreme Court of Canada upholds the billboard tax (2012).

### Leadership

Devon Ostrom is broadly acknowledged to have been the driving force behind this ongoing campaign. He acted as public and media spokesperson, convener and organiser for more than a decade. By all accounts, this is a case of an individual being able to galvanize an entire community in support of a strong idea.

### Inner workings

A number of arts organizations supported the campaign over the long-term. Most notably, the Toronto Arts Council (TAC). The organization acted as the primary liaison between Beautiful City and City Hall. As a part of the City's commitment to raise municipal funding for the arts to 25\$ per capita, TAC's budget is slated to double between 2012 (\$10 million) and 2017 (\$20 million).

One of the winning components of Beautiful City's campaign was a public petition, launched in the first year of Rob Ford's mayoral mandate. The petition in support of increased municipal arts funding was signed by more than 20,000 people, in just 20 days. Names and email addresses from the petition were compiled, and constituted a massive email distribution list – managed by TAC, for Beautiful City. Over time, active email addresses were merged into TAC's permanent distribution list.

### Time and Money

Beautiful City succeeded at virtually no cost, with volunteer time as its sole resource. Staff at various several organizations, including TAC, obtained special dispensation in order to take part in the campaign. TAC provided space for meetings, and managed email lists.

Staff at TAC contributed 10 to 20 hours per month in volunteer time to quarterback advocacy and liaise with City Hall. By all accounts, Devon's volunteer time was even more considerable.

### Significant Outcomes

- Secured \$6 million in new arts funding from the city in 2013;
- Secured an additional \$4.5 million in new arts funding from the city in 2014, bringing the total yearly funding commitment from the Billboard tax to \$10.5 million.

## La Table des Organismes Nationaux en Arts et Culture (La TONAC)

### Overview

La TONAC was established in 1998, at a time when national tables existed in several sectors (arts and culture, education, economic development, etc.) These tables were funded by the Department of Canadian Heritage – Official Languages Programs, and seen as essential platforms for determining the issues, needs and priorities of Official Language Minority Communities.

La TONAC acts as a consortium for all 8 Francophone NASOs, based outside of Québec. Together these organizations represent OLMC artists and arts organizations working in theatre, music, publishing, film and TV production and visual arts. Over time, TONAC has been instrumental in developing multi-year strategic plans for the sector and in advocating to Federal departments, agencies and public servants for adequate, stable, funding for the Francophone arts ecosystem across Canada.

Over time, virtually all other national tables were disbanded and their funding was cut-off. Today, only two such tables remain active, La TONAC, and the *Table nationale en éducation* (a similar forum for not-for-profits working in French-language education outside of Québec).

### Key Initiatives

- *L'Entente pour le développement des arts et de la culture dans la francophonie en situation minoritaire*. This formal agreement is signed by the Minister of Canadian Heritage, the chair of the Fédération culturelle canadienne-française (FCCF) and the Executive Director's or CEOs of the following Federal Departments and Agencies: Department of Canadian Heritage, Canada Council for the Arts, Société Radio-Canada, Telefilm Canada, the National Film Board.

### Leadership

All members of La TONAC, including FCCF, are members of equal status and on equal footing. Each member takes part in sharing best practices, and informs agenda setting. TONAC's multi-year action plan is, in fact, a compendium of the strategic plans of each of its members.

### Inner workings

TONAC's member organizations meet in person for one half-day, 2 or 3 times per year (notably during FCCF's National Board meeting and AGM) and by telephone as needed.

Members also form delegations (ranging from 2 or 3 individuals to upwards of 20 individuals) who take part in bilateral meetings and working groups with various Federal arts and culture agencies (signatories of the *Entente pour le développement...*).

In all, six bilateral meetings are scheduled every year. Bilateral meetings are an opportunity for representatives from various NASOs to discuss issues with a given Federal agency or department. Members also convene working groups, bringing various Federal agencies and community partners together to discuss issues pertaining to each specific arts discipline.

### Time and Money

FCCF receives project funding (\$20K to \$25K per year) from DCH-Official languages to convene and document TONAC's work. The bulk of this funding is committed to covering the travel cost of TONAC delegates during bilateral meetings. FCCF provides secretariat (logistics, grant and report writing, phone conferencing, meeting space, etc.) for La TONAC.

### Significant Outcomes

- Yearly dialogue with senior public servants (Directors, Executive Directors, Assistant Deputy Ministers and Deputy Ministers) tied to all Federal arts and cultural agencies. DCH, and each signatory agency, includes its meetings with TONAC members as part of its annual reports under the Official Languages Act. Participation at bilateral meetings and working groups is prescribed by the Entente, and broadly perceived as a strategic means of consulting the Francophone Arts Community. Given that TONAC members set the agendas working groups, and that agendas for bilateral meetings are set in conjunction between TONAC members and each Federal agency, meetings provide ample opportunity to advocate for sector priorities and to dialogue with decision makers.
- Ongoing tracking of Federal funding to Francophone arts organizations. At each TONAC meeting, members share updates on the status of their funding and their members' funding. If any trends or anomalies are identified, FCCF follows up with the relevant governmental departments or agencies.
- Solidarity among member organizations. TONAC has proven particularly active and persuasive as a forum for collective advocacy in times of crisis. When one discipline or organization is faced with a difficult situation (financial or political) it can be assured of the support of the other members of the table and their backing for collective advocacy to government.

## Ottawa Cultural Alliance

### Overview

The Ottawa Cultural Alliance was established during the winter of 2015. Several Ottawa based service and arts organizations were transitioning new leadership, and there was renewed interest in collaboration and collective advocacy.

The Alliance is a semi-formal consortium of 6 multidisciplinary, member-based organizations (local arts councils, service organizations, heritage organizations, festivals and museum associations). It is not a legal entity as such. It has been modeled on similar entities (Vancouver Cultural Alliance, *Alliance culturelle de l'Ontario*, etc.).

Several local umbrella/service organizations have collaborated on ad-hoc advocacy initiatives in the past, but this marks the first ongoing forum for collaboration and collective action among this diverse collection of not-for-profit organizations. Moreover, senior bureaucrats and councillors have called for collective action to ensure the Plan is not shelved.

### Key Initiatives

- Ensure the City implements its multi-year Arts and Heritage Plan and follows-up on the commitments made within the plan. Given that the City's Arts and Heritage Plan was drafted jointly with the community, it seems strategic that a community-based entity should ensure that the plan is acted upon over the long-term.
- Develop shared positions. Members know that they will be able to exert greater influence if they speak with one voice. The Alliance provides a forum to build consensus and provide shared messages for that voice to carry.

### Leadership

This is a new initiative, but one that certainly emerged as a result of abundant turnover at the ED level among Ottawa-based arts and heritage organizations over the past year. A governance framework has been developed, though members have taken care not to overly formalize their dealings.

### Inner workings

The Alliance is not currently a legal entity. Discussions pertaining to governance and structure are ongoing.

### Time and Money

The Alliance has no budget and operates thanks to the in-kind contributions of its members. Members have committed to chipping-in as needed, though the impact of this commitment for those organizations that have limited financial and human capacity is unclear.

One member organization donates meeting space.

Ongoing costs are expected to be minimal.

### Significant Outcomes

Though it is too soon to report any substantive outcomes, members feel that the Alliance will help to maintain consistent messaging and should strengthen the sectors voice and influence vis-à-vis City Hall.

### **Analysis:**

It is difficult to quantify the value of the in-kind contributions (staff time and organizational resources) that have made these collective advocacy initiatives work. To be sure, the volume of hours donated to the cause of collective action is enormous and stands as the greatest indicator of the perceived value of these various initiatives.

These networks exist as a result of the collective good will and ongoing investments of their members. They operate on a collaborative and, in most cases, co-operative, model. Workload and hard costs are usually shared amongst the members or covered by revenues from project grants. Human and operating capacity of most the selected collective advocacy initiatives are minimal or non-existent. These initiatives last or subside depending on the efforts of a small number of leaders who contribute significant personal time.

Interviewees reported that, at times, the added responsibility and workload of these initiatives was a drain on their energy. Paradoxically, they also reported that their role in collective advocacy initiatives was a huge motivator in their professional lives and provided tremendous, ongoing, learning opportunities. The synergy, camaraderie and solidarity gained through initiatives such as these are important support mechanisms for managers of service organizations and membership organizations.

Without exception, leaders of these initiatives felt the process and the results were worth the time and energy they and their organizations invested. They felt their work on these initiatives was instrumental to sector-wide development,



raised the profile of their respective organizations and achieved greater results than any individually driven undertaking could have. Several interviewees also indicated that their leadership in collective advocacy led to positive assessment by funders using peer assessment.

### **Toward a working model**

The arts community organizes differently depending which of Canada's three-tiers of government (federal, provincial, municipal) it is targeting. Language and geography are also determining factors. Historically, the French-Canadian arts community has been more frequently inclined to exert pressure and deplore policy, whereas its Anglophone counterparts have focused on establishing dialogue and leveraging new opportunities through partnership and relationship building.

There are various models at play among the initiatives highlighted in this report. Several (MAL, PASO Coalition, Canadian Arts Coalition, etc.) take the form of a *front commun* or consortium, seeking to speak and act as one. Others (Beautiful City) seek to be a catalyst to leverage popular opinion and support for the arts. This later model is reminiscent of Americans for the Arts, a populist coalition, broadly supportive of the overall arts ecology. It is a model that has never truly been deployed in Canada, beyond the local level, but that could be immensely impactful.

Each of the chosen initiatives was driven by an informal group, rather than an actual organization. Several interviewees stated that a group working on collective advocacy should be hard to pin down and able to operate independently of public funding. This view may, in part, be attributable to the recent demise of the Canadian Conference of the Arts, an organization that had been a leader in shaping cultural policy in Canada, but was vulnerable as an advocate in that it was entirely reliant on public funding.

Nonetheless, most initiatives rely on at least some basic level of support (financial and human). Whatever shape it may take (donated staff time to convene and organize meetings, outsourced communications or lobbying work, part-time logistical support, etc.), sustained activity requires the means to prepare, advocate and communicate.

In several cases, credibility has been predicated – or at the very least enhanced – by solid, objective data (VAA, Beautiful City, etc.) Making a case requires a foundation of information upon which groups can base their requests and proposals. Several interviewees stated that the lack of research on issues that are of particular concern for the arts community have hindered their ability to persuade decision makers.

In every instance, success has been conditional on the long-term development of two types of relationships. Firstly, partners must develop mutual trust and respect among themselves. Cases where interviewees reported the strongest, most meaningful ties to their partners occurred where groups worked to build and advocate based on consensus for the issue. Limiting the number of asks, striving for message clarity, agreeing on tone and sticking to consensus issues seems to be key to sustaining solidarity over time.

Secondly, ties between the partners and the decision-makers they strive to influence are of critical importance. In several cases, the process has been greatly eased when advocacy groups have found supporters within government who are willing to invest or to help align messaging with government priorities.

### **Conclusion**

For many years, arts organizations and community builders have come together at the municipal, provincial and federal levels to collectively make a case for public arts funding across the country. Their groupings have taken various shapes, initiated an impressive array of activities, leveraged resources and shared workloads in a variety of innovative ways.

Arts leaders continue to take part in these collective advocacy initiatives and groups because they share the conviction that collective advocacy is worth the effort and that the impact of collective advocacy is significantly greater than discipline-specific or individual campaign. Decision makers continue to value these collective initiatives, because they bring diverse collections of stakeholders together under one umbrella, help to build consensus and speak with one, clear, voice, thereby easing consultations and the policy development process. Not only is collective advocacy likely to continue to be a fixture in Canada's arts ecology, its various examples of effective and efficient advocacy may provide models for other sectors in their ongoing efforts to organize and bring about meaningful change.

**Appendix 1: List of Interviewees**

Katherine Carleton	Executive Director, Orchestras Canada
Demetra Christakos	Executive Director, Ontario Association of Art Galleries
Kristian Clarke	Executive Director, CARFAC Ontario
Kate Cornell	Executive Director, Canadian Dance Assembly
Sylvie Gamache	Directrice générale, Conseil Québécois de la musique
Bastien Gilbert	Directeur général, Regroupement des centres d'artistes autogérés du Québec
Jewell Goodwyn	Executive Director, Artist-Run Centres and Collectives of Ontario
Shannon Litzenburger	Independent dance artist
Lise Leblanc	Directrice générale, Association des groupes en arts visuels francophones
Carol Ann Pilon	Directrice adjointe, Fédération culturelle canadienne-française
Victoria Steele	Executive Director, Arts Ottawa East Arts Council
Susan Wright	Deputy Director, Toronto Arts Council

**Appendix 2: Questionnaire****PASO Coalition Interview Questions****The basics:**

What advocacy initiative(s) have you been a part of over the past decade?

What was initiative's primary scope (local, provincial, pan-Canadian)?

What was your role/your organization's role within this initiative?

How did the initiative get started? What issues was it conceived to address/help overcome?

How long did the initiative last? Is it ongoing?

In your estimation, was the initiative successful? What was achieved through the initiative? To what extent do you feel it reached its goals? What do you feel it changed?

**Collaborative models:**

Who led the initiative?

Did leadership change over time? If so, how were the transitions handled?

Who were the partners involved with this initiative?

Where were the partners based?

What roles did the partners play in support of the initiative?

How did the partners work together throughout the initiative?

Were there obstacles to successful collaboration that you needed to overcome over the course of the initiative?

How did the partners communicate throughout the initiative?

What lessons did you learn through your part in this initiative?

**Cost-benefit:**

How was the initiative funded/resourced?

What did the initiative cost, on a yearly basis?

Who funded the initiative and to what extent?

Beyond financial contributions, how did participants and partners contribute to the initiative's operations? (staff time, admin services, social media work, etc.)

How much time, on a monthly basis, did you/your organization commit to this initiative?

How much time did other partners commit to the initiative?

How did your board and staff perceive the initiative?

### **Advocacy Outcomes**

What were the successful outcomes of your collaborative advocacy initiatives?

Were there any spin-off benefits you can think of?

How was the initiative received/regarded by the decision makers it targeted (funders, governments, elected officials, etc.)?

Is there a digital presence or trace online of your advocacy collaboration?

Do you feel the time, energy and resources your and the partners invested in the initiative was worthwhile? Why/Why not?

### **Interview pour la Coalition PASO — Questionnaire**

#### **À la base...**

À quelle(s) initiative(s) de positionnement avez-vous participé au cours de la dernière décennie?

Quelle était la portée de l'initiative (locale, provinciale, pancanadienne)?

Quel était votre rôle/le rôle de votre organisme dans le cadre de cette initiative?

Comment l'initiative a-t-elle vu le jour? Quels enjeux devait-elle surmonter?

Pendant combien de temps l'initiative a-t-elle duré? Est-ce que le travail se poursuit?

À votre avis, est-ce que l'initiative a porté fruit? Qu'avez-vous accompli grâce à cette initiative? À quel point sentez-vous que vous avez atteint les résultats visés? En quoi l'état de la situation a-t-il changé depuis le début de l'initiative?

### **Modèles de collaboration**

Qui menait l'initiative? Qui étaient ses leaders?

Est-ce qu'il y a eu des transitions de leadership au cours de l'initiative?

Qui étaient les partenaires/participants de l'initiative?

Les partenaires étaient établis où?

Quels rôles jouaient les partenaires en appui à l'initiative?

Comment les partenaires ont-ils collaboré dans le cadre de l'initiative?

Avez-vous dû surmonter des obstacles en ce qui a trait à la collaboration?

Comment est-ce que les partenaires communiquaient au cours de l'initiative?

Que sont les leçons apprises de votre participation à l'initiative?

### **Coût-bénéfice**

D'où provenait le financement/les ressources nécessaires pour l'initiative?

Quel était le coût total de l'initiative, d'une année à l'autre?

Qui contribuaient au financement de l'initiative, et à quel point?

Mis à part les contributions financières, en quoi les partenaires et participants ont-ils contribué au roulement de l'initiative? (temps d'employé, services administratifs, gestion bénévole des communications, etc.)

Sur une base mensuelle, combien de temps avez-vous accordé/votre organisme a-t-il accordé à l'initiative?

Comment l'initiative était-elle perçue par votre personnel et votre CA?

**Les résultats du travail de positionnement**

Quelles étaient les retombées de l'initiative?

Connaissez-vous des résultats dérivés de l'initiative?

Comment les décideurs ciblés (bailleurs de fonds, gouvernements, élus, etc.) percevaient-ils l'initiative?

Est-ce que l'initiative a laissé des traces sur le web?

Êtes-vous d'avis que le temps, l'énergie et les ressources que vous et vos partenaires avez consacrés à l'initiative étaient justifiés? Pourquoi/pourquoi pas?