

**Consultation on Arts and Learning for
the
UNESCO World Conference on
Arts Education**

Canadian Commission for UNESCO

Youth Consultation

**Final Report
Ottawa Meeting
350 Albert Street
December 15th 2005**

**Ottawa
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the course of a one day consultation, twenty-six participants between the ages of 18 and 30 representing Canadian youth from across the country met in Ottawa on December 15th, 2005, at 350 Albert Street, to discuss the state of arts learning and education in Canada. This meeting was the sixth of a series of consultation meetings that were held across the country, in Toronto, Halifax, Regina, Vancouver and Ottawa. The issues discussed were arts education and creativity; accessibility; and strengthening the role of arts and learning. The results of these consultations will serve as part of Canada's contribution to the World Conference on Arts Education in Portugal in 2006, as well as a resource for "*Arts and Learning: A Call to Action*", a project coordinated by The Coalition for Arts Education in Canada.

Max Wyman, President of The Canadian Commission for UNESCO set the tone of the meeting in his introduction. He spoke about the role of UNESCO, informed participants about past meetings and presented the purpose of the present meeting. Participants then introduced themselves and described the institutions they represented, offering the group a brief mapping of some of the organizations involved in the arts. The deliberations which followed focused on formal, non-formal and informal education in the arts; the benefits of arts education to the individual and to society; the purpose of arts education; arguments for fostering creative expression and creative activity; the importance and need for experiential involvement in the arts; learning about, in and through the arts; accessibility; quality arts education; and advocacy for arts education.

Challenges to arts education were also discussed. These included social and economic disparities and inequities, lack of public awareness of arts education and the importance of arts education, new ways of thinking about arts education and the need for quality and diverse training in this area.

Finally, many proposals and suggestions were made throughout the meeting. These were recorded but not officially endorsed by the group.

BACKGROUND

Max Wyman, Chair of the meeting, summarized the roles of UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) and the Canadian Commission for UNESCO.

UNESCO is in some sense the ethical arm and a think tank for the United Nations, which brings together 191 Member States. The Organization often acts as an early warning system that identifies issues before they become problematic and sets standards in its areas of competence.

The role of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO (CCU) is to provide a forum for governments and civil society and to act as a catalyst for the participation of Canadian organizations and committed individuals in UNESCO's mandated areas: education, natural and social sciences, culture and communications, and information. It operates at arm's length from the Canadian government.

One of UNESCO's roles as an "upstream" agency is to identify areas or issues of concern. One such area is creativity and arts education, which UNESCO has identified as an essential building block in the creation of a culture of peace. It has therefore called on Member States to work to place teaching about, in and through the arts at the heart of formal and non-formal education.

At the UNESCO General Conference of 1999, then Director-General Federico Mayor launched an appeal for the promotion of arts education and creativity in schools and in non-formal settings as part of the construction of a culture of peace. He called for a holistic approach to arts education that included the participation of cultural institutions, communities and families. A broad definition of arts education was to be used that would include such arts as the spoken word, literature, visual arts, music, drama, dance and film.

The objectives of UNESCO and its global community for arts education are to contribute to the integration of the arts and creativity in the learning process; to foster the development of the fulfilled individual; and to encourage mutual respect and understanding among cultures and peoples.

From 2001 to 2005 regional expert meetings were held in Finland, Fiji, Brazil, Jordan, South Africa, Hong Kong, Lithuania and Korea to share best practices, examine trends and program frameworks and content, and to prepare for the World Conference on Arts Education in Lisbon, Portugal, March 6-9, 2006.

The preparatory meeting for the Europe region was held in Vilnius, Lithuania, in September, 2005. Canada participated in this meeting with experts from provincial ministries and from the field of arts education. The objectives of this meeting were to examine political and program issues in arts education in preparation for the World

Conference. Several recommendations followed this conference and are available on the web site, [LEA International: UNESCO Culture Sector](#).

In March 2006 UNESCO will be hosting, in Portugal, the World Conference on Arts Education: Building Creative Capacities for the 21st Century. The conference will have four major themes: Advocacy, The Impact of Arts Education, Strategies for Promoting Arts Education Policies, and Teachers' Training Policies. It will include specialised panels, roundtable discussions and practical workshops. It is intended that the work of the regional preparatory meetings and the World Conference will result in an international action plan for arts education. Canada's participation in the World Conference 2006 will include a presentation of the results of consultations held across the country by the Canadian Commission for UNESCO and its partners.

The Canada Council for the Arts and the Canadian Conference of the Arts are major partners in the work with the Commission. They have put together an arts and learning initiative, "*Arts and Learning: A Call to Action*", whose objectives are to bring together common interests and a united action approach to arts education; to create a greater awareness of the benefit of the arts and creativity as a learning strategy both in the schools and in the community; to instill arts education in public policy; advocacy; create partnerships; and promote best practices. Other partners include the Council of Ministers of Education in Canada, the Department of Canadian Heritage, the Canadian Public Arts Funders, and the Coalition for Arts Education in Canada.

Purpose of the Consultations in Canada

The Commission, with the help of its partners, has hosted a series of six consultation meetings across Canada. These meetings have a double function. First, they provide an immediate input for the Vilnius regional meeting and the upcoming meeting of the World Conference in Portugal. Second, they present a more comprehensive view of arts education in Canada and one that the Canadian Commission and its partners can use in their initiative, "*Arts and Learning: A Call to Action*".

Information based on the experiences of participants and collected through the consultations will give a wide-ranging picture of what exists in Canada. This information will be contained in a report that will be presented in Portugal.

The long-term goals are:

- to advance arts learning in Canada by putting it back on the agenda as a priority using the international focus;
- to use a transdisciplinary approach, one that is not rooted only in arts education and culture but in other disciplines as well and that reaches beyond the educational system into cultural institutions, communities and families;
- to establish arts learning as a life-long process.

The **purpose of the Ottawa December 2005 meeting** was to describe arts and learning as it exists from a national youth perspective and to describe existing trends. The subjects discussed included creativity and arts education, the current status of arts education from the perspective of formal, informal and non-formal education, and from a perspective of life-long learning. Finally, participants shared ideas on how to strengthen the role of the arts and learning.

Methodology

The report was prepared from recordings of the proceedings of a day of consultation on arts education and arts learning in Canada which followed a broad agenda and involved wide-ranging discussions. Comments are not reported in their entirety or in the order that they were presented but rather are summarized and clustered with similar comments. The report synthesizes the contributions of all participants.

Definitions

For the purpose of this document the following definitions of formal, non-formal and informal arts education will be used:

- **Formal education** is education or training that is received in schools, colleges and universities.
- **Non-formal** can be described as organized, systematic educational activity carried on outside the framework of the formal system.
- **Informal education** is defined as learning at home or in some other non-institutional setting, such as learning from parents or family members, and lifelong learning that essentially happens as part of the experience of living.

Agenda The agenda for the meeting can be found in Annex A.

Participants A list of the participants and other information is attached as Annex B.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

Introduction

Max Wyman, president of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, gave a brief description of UNESCO and its role in the world. He then stated the reasons for convening this meeting and listed some of the topics that would be discussed.

He suggested we think of the group as a think tank on arts education. Participants would be invited to share their views on formal, non-formal and informal education in the arts, talk about the benefits and accessibility to arts education, and state their arguments for long term support of the arts, in order to build a better case for arts education.

Max Wyman noted that there are many reasons for the timeliness of this subject. One of these is the suggestion that we are short-changing youth as well as ourselves: we are not exposed enough to an education that promotes creativity and the use of the imagination. Imagination, he said, can help us face new challenges. He commented on many thinkers who suggest that we are moving from a society built on resources to one built on imagination in its broadest sense. Imagination, he said, will help prepare a new generation of learners to face the challenges of the future. There is a need to encourage people to use creative activity to grow. He questioned how best to infuse imagination inside and outside the education system. The basics (language, mathematics and science) are important but that action needs to be taken to integrate creativity and imagination back into education. What better way than through the arts? How do we do this? How do we restore imagination and creativity in the learning process for all? How do we improve arts education in Canada? These are some of the questions he encouraged participants to think about.

Mr. Wyman explained that education is a provincial jurisdiction and that all partners are hoping to be able to work with all the provinces on this project. There is a lot of good will around these issues: a spirit of openness and a desire to share ideas and inform others and ourselves. The long-term objectives of this project are to integrate and infuse the arts into education; to assure necessary resources to make it happen; to seek more accreditation for teachers in the arts; and to make education better. All around the world new efforts and new initiatives to make fundamental changes are being undertaken by governments. He stressed the need for strong arguments and solid evidence to bring about change as well as the need to have art, heritage and culture as part of the curriculum. One of the most important recommendations that came out of the Vilnius and Korea pre-conference meetings was the need to build an advocacy campaign and develop solid research to persuade governments and policy makers of the importance of arts education.

Warm-up activity

Participants were asked to introduce themselves and share an arts experience that they found transformative. This activity not only allowed participants to share very special events in their lives but it also created a convivial atmosphere for the meeting and broached many of the important issues on the agenda.

According to participants, teachers inspired the most significant arts education experiences. Almost half of the participants described the motivation and training they had received from a remarkable and exemplary teacher. These teachers provided mentorship, encouragement, stability and direction, passed on their passion for the arts, developed inherent skills such as critical thinking, and helped their students through difficult times by using the arts. Courses at the elementary, high school and university levels were significant in that they provided success and recognition, led to career choices in the arts and gave them skills that are useful today in their daily lives.

Pleasurable and transformational experiences were also cited as major examples. For some it was participating in a play as a child, visiting an art gallery, engaging in art events in other countries or finding solace and strength in music. For some, their art experiences were therapeutic, a “lifesaver” that helped them through difficult periods. Other stories reflected how art could be used for dealing with issues of social justice such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child. For many, their art experiences broke down social barriers. It transformed not only the audience but the performers doing the presentations. Many of these experiences were given as reasons for their present and continued involvement in the arts.

Some participants gave examples of early family experiences as providing motivation for involvement in the arts. For one participant, his many relatives involved in the arts were role models and a motivation for him. Another participant spoke about early involvement in art activities and how his brother steered him back towards this first path. Others received continual support and encouragement in the exploration of the arts. Participants stated that these experiences gave them a rich knowledge base and were an important determinant in their career choices.

Employment experience in the arts was a defining moment for several others. These events and moments provided them with continual inspiration, challenge, energy and joy. Some participants had used the arts in their work with disenfranchised and incarcerated youth and people living with HIV, including music, literature, mural-making and photography.

EXPLORATORY SESSION

Arts Education and Creativity

The Chair opened the first part of the agenda, dealing with arts education and creativity with the questions: *Why are the arts important? What are the arguments that can convince decision-makers of its importance?*

Many participants took up the challenge and offered the following comments and arguments that support arts education as well as creative expression and creative activity for the individual and for society. These statements were based on personal experiences and stories which participants shared with the group.

The arts and arts education are important to the individual and society for the following reasons:

- Art defines us.
- Art is culture.
- The arts provide us with a sense of history.
- The arts and arts education broaden the individual.
- Art changes us and changes society.
- Arts education develops critical thinking.
- Art is a portal for other experiences.
- Art reflects the health of a society and is a requirement for a healthy society; the arts provide an essential social and psychological infrastructure.
- Art works! It is a great tool that lends itself to many purposes.
- Art speaks to our need for mystery, for difference and for living in the question.
- Art is as important as other necessities, coming right after food and shelter.
- Art speaks to our primal needs.
- Art creates community, brings people together.
- Arts education builds community and social cohesion.
- Arts help society share values.
- Art activities can prevent social and personal problems.
- Art gives us a sense of accomplishment.
- Art experiences give participants a sense of belonging.
- The arts are an integral part of our daily activities.
- The arts play an archival role in society.
- Arts are a way of inquiry and of gathering information which is very significant because we live in an “information and knowledge-based society”.
- The arts provide a powerful thinking tool allowing us to understand important issues before taking decisions.
- Our power to invent is very much related to arts education and art activities in our society.
- Because the arts and arts education are so broad they reach greater and more diverse audiences.

- Arts and creativity make us unique; this is a biological trait humans have and we should celebrate it.
- The group-building aspect of art experiences helps disenfranchised youth and helps in crime prevention.
- Art and art experiences make us happy, providing joy and wonderful memories.
- Art prevents the loss of culture and promotes tolerance, compassion and understanding.
- Arts education expands our understanding of ourselves and others, giving us a better understanding of the world around us.
- Arts education turns on many students, they come alive, push themselves more, are more willing to take on tasks, look at possibilities and are more supportive towards one other.
- Art experiences are not as expensive as some video games and are more beneficial and rewarding.
- Arts education helps bridge the gap between high and low art, the rich and the poor, social classes, religious groups and people from all walks of life.
- Art transforms the artist as well as the audience.
- Art breaks down language barriers, allowing us to share and to communicate on a more universal scale.
- Art activities create opportunities for diverse groups of people to work on great causes regardless of their political, social or ethnic backgrounds.
- Arts education gives you access to new information and knowledge that can only be accessed through the body.
- The art experience can be cathartic and therapeutic for individuals and whole groups.
- The arts create diversity, which is important for a balanced life.

How to Achieve a Strengthened Role for Arts and Learning

After having dealt with the importance of arts education, the arts and creativity, the participants were invited to comment on how best to develop and support arts education. This prompted participants to make comments on accessibility, advocacy for the arts and quality education in the arts.

Accessibility

- Arts education should be given in publicly funded schools to assure accessibility to all children and youth.
- Arts education should be made available not only in the schools but in the community and for all age groups.
- Arts education is very accessible to most groups because they can use their own art forms and history to enrich their curriculum.
- Not all schools have access to good materials and instruments to do the arts or to artists from their communities as role models.

- Youth rock groups are an accessible form of the arts that encourages student participation.

Advocacy

- Acting locally in a small community is easier than acting globally.
- Promote the fact that having arts education gives individuals an edge in whatever they do.
- Arts education brings both an economic and a social benefit for communities; these benefits are interrelated and complementary and should not be viewed separately.
- Market arts education to different audiences by varying the approaches taken and by using their language and their perspective on arts education. The use of appropriate language for different situations is important in any advocacy plan, e.g. changing *Learning Through the Arts* to *Empowering Through the Arts*.
- Create a continual flow of information and updates to and for different target audiences with ideas and examples of best practices.
- Find appropriate ways to measure cultural success.
- Action research is an important advocacy tool that can be used for arts education in communities. The tensions of doing community-based research can be overcome by participatory action research, research done by the community members. There is a need to advocate loudly for this form of research.
- Develop a GDWI - Gross Domestic Wellness Index - that reflects the role of art in wellness in society and that could be used as an economic barometer.
- Use solid research, information and data that can stand up to scrutiny and are accessible to a large audience.

Quality Education in the Arts

- Arts education should be available in all schools. This is a given.
- It is important to provide high quality art and high quality arts education.
- Arts education in Canada is too centred on the auditory and the visual and needs a better balance.
- Not only do we need arts education in the schools, we need quality arts education in other sectors.
- Arts education provides models for students which in turn help them present and articulate their own histories.
- Funding arts education is not the same as funding specific art forms and should have its own set of requirements and criteria.
- In arts education, time is an important factor. Arts education and art activity take time and require reflection. This needs to be understood and accepted.
- Use youth-driven media in the school curriculum to raise relevant issues from their perspective.
- Artists and artists' groups can provide teacher training in specific art forms.
- Fusion of art forms should be encouraged as it creates better cohesion of cultures.
- Transdisciplinary approaches need to be part of teacher pre-service and in-service education.

- Provide art materials and support to encourage teachers to use the arts in teaching other subjects such as math, science, geography etc.
- Special art projects in school are a great way to involve all of the community in learning and to raise the arts profile.
- There is a real need for good art teachers who encourage and promote artistic expression.
- There is a need for a better distribution of information. Art teachers are not always aware of opportunities for arts learning in their own community.
- Arts education and academic education are equally important and complementary.
- More programs are needed to meet the demands of life-long learning in the arts.
- Where possible, artists should be hired to teach pre-service or in-service courses for teachers.

Proposals and Suggestions for advocating for the arts

Youth participants at this consultation meeting voiced similar thoughts and suggestions as were put forward at other meetings. They were, however, more forceful in stating that arts education is now a given. Their suggestions emphasized how to develop and strengthen it. One of their strongest statements was that the arts are experiential. The arts and arts education need to be experienced. Many of the suggestions listed below stress this point in different ways.

1. Experiential activities in the arts should be part of all meetings.
2. Have creative moments during all meetings (like a coffee break).
3. Tax breaks should be given to organizations for using art activities in their team building practices.
4. It is difficult to tell people about arts education: you must show them, it is an experiential thing.
5. We need to make use of all international conventions that have been signed in order to advocate for the role of the arts education in certain areas and highlight implications for arts education.
6. With the help of experts, a type of Kyoto accord for the arts and arts education should be drawn up. Rather than debate the presence of arts education, let us debate its implementation worldwide.
7. The transmission of cultural knowledge is important and youth should be called upon to do this.
8. We need to demystify the arts as a club belonging only to a select few.
9. Encourage and have more transdisciplinary projects like the Three Rivers Project in the Yukon, a three-year project which integrated many disciplines and brought the community together.
10. There is a great need for strong research on the role and benefits of the arts and arts education. A clearinghouse should be set up.
11. Combine art festivals with other festivals and double your audiences.
12. Artists need to become the politicians and the decision makers.
13. Focus on activities that bring diverse groups together.

14. Create projects that get people involved in the arts without their really knowing it at the start.
15. There is a need for research that follows up on a variety of art experiences.
16. Make use of the media to promote the arts: showcase our successes.
17. Produce art in new, non-traditional venues to attract new clients of the arts.
18. Redefine the arts. We define the arts too narrowly and people don't recognize that they are part of our daily lives.
19. Inter-generational dialogue will support and benefit the arts.
20. Highlight the importance and the benefit of hiring artists in all forms of businesses and organizations.
21. Sustainable policies and funding for arts education and the arts are needed.
22. We need to reframe the debate so that social policies and economic policies are not pitted against each other.
23. We need to shift the burden of proof. There is no need to prove that of arts education and the arts are important; let others prove that they are not.

Participants recommended that this group be allowed to continue the dialogue, be it through future conferences or through the use of a List serve. All participants are committed to their creative work and to social change, and have much to share.

Closing Remarks

The Chair thanked the participants warmly for their generous contributions to the consultation.

Appendix A

**Consultation on Arts and Learning
and the UNESCO World Conference on Arts Education
December 15, 2005
9:00 am – 4:30 pm
Canada Council for the Arts
350, Albert Street, Ottawa
Massey-Lévesque Room, 12th Floor**

Agenda

Chair: Max Wyman, President, Canadian Commission for UNESCO

Welcoming remarks by the Chair

Presentation by Katherine Berg, Special Advisor to the Secretary-General, Canadian Commission for UNESCO on the World Conference: Context and objectives of the consultations.

Issues to be discussed include:

- 1.- Arts education and creativity
 - Effect on the individual, effect on society
- 2.- Accessibility
 - Formal, informal, non-formal education
 - Impact of new technologies
- 3.- Quality in Education
 - Teacher training
 - Mentorship
 - Lifelong learning
- 4.- How to achieve a strengthened role for the arts and learning
 - Best practices, tools, programmes
 - What doesn't work?
- 5.- Proposals and suggestions

Appendix B: Participants with Biographical Note

Kevork Andonian

Kevork Andonian is currently pursuing a Masters in Music with specialization in theory and composition at the University of Ottawa. His compositions have been performed in Canada, the United States, Germany, the Czech Republic, and Armenia. As a pianist, Kevork has performed at many cultural and community events. He is also very much involved in music education, having taught children with special needs, private students as well as students at the university level.

Alexandre Boily

Born in Ottawa in 1979, Alexandre Boily started his musical education studying piano with the Hungarian pianist and composer, Gabor Finta. He attended De La Salle, a high school specializing in the arts in Ottawa, where he achieved recognition with a prize for excellence. Mr. Boily then entered the music department's baccalaureat program at the University of Ottawa, studied with pianist Jean Desmarais and became orchestra director Laurence Ewashko's assistant. Mr. Boily has performed as a pianist in Canada, Europe and Japan. From 2002 to 2005, he was the artistic director and orchestra conductor of Kanata's Symphony Orchestra. He also works with the "*Orchestre symphonique des jeunes de l'Ontario français*". In 2004 Mr. Boily was invited to speak at the International Music Festival in Kisarazu Japan about music education in Canada. He has been teaching piano classes since 1999 and also gives music history classes as well as voice and theory classes.

Dustin Browne

Dustin Browne has been actively working the frontline with youth in need of services for five years in Regina. He began his work in community development while attending classes at the University of Regina. Over a five year period Dustin's contracted services included creating an arts mentoring program with specific focus on large scale murals for the participants of Street Culture. Through networking with other agencies, he went on to work for the 'H.E.A.T.' Project (Help Eliminate Auto Theft). While facilitating components of this program, Dustin was also instrumental in helping coordinate services & programs that resulted from the changes in the youth criminal justice act. In addition, Dustin worked directly with the Youth Justice Forum, and volunteered many hours at other youth-centered programs. As a result of his commitment, Dustin was the recipient of the 2004 City of Regina Crime Prevention Award - Youth Leader category. After receiving his BA in Political Science and Sociology, Dustin worked for the Regina public school board, followed by fulltime work with the 'H.E.A.T.' project. Dustin is an arts mentor, helping youth develop skills for greater employment opportunity. Recently he conducted a lengthy federally-funded research project on the arts-based practices of Street Culture, which allowed him to identify the benefits gained for both youth and

community at large using art as a tool for relationship building & community development.

Steven R. Dang

Steven is a SSHRC doctoral scholar at the University of British Columbia's School of Community & Regional Planning, where he is researching youth civic engagement through the arts, sport, culture and recreation. He holds a Master of Arts in Planning, specializing in cultural diversification. In addition to his studies, Steven is Coordinator of *GetOut! Ideas Factory*, for the City of Vancouver. The *Ideas Factory* actively involves young people in research, development, evaluation and training activities that support Vancouver's efforts to enhance the health & resilience of youth through active engagement. Steven consults on a variety of other community cultural development projects, such as the annual National Youth Week events, the Vancouver Youth in Film and Video Network and several neighbourhood-based arts initiatives. He is a regular contributor to the Creative City Network of Canada, a national association of municipal employees involved in arts and culture. Steven is an occasional actor, writer and musician.

Rachel Flood

Rachel Flood is a Vancouver poet and art administrator who has been performing at and producing events for over seven years. As the Executive Director of the Working Arts Society and the owner and creator of Flood Productions she has been instrumental in the creation of many local events and programs including the annual Sista'Hood Celebration, the Momentum Youth Project and the New Forms Festival. Rachel has performed locally at the Vancouver Folk Music Festival, the Vancouver Poetry Slam and Under the Volcano; and internationally at the Berkley, Brooklyn, Denver and San Diego Slam as well as poetry venues in Boston, Portland Maine, and Chicago. She has shared the stage with the likes of Medusa, Michael Franti, K-OS and Siren's Echo to name but a few. Rachel has a chapbook called *I Always Thought It Could Never Happen To Me*, and two CDs: *Dirty Beautiful City* (2000) and *Superheroes* (2005). She has also been included in the *Coastal Tongue Anthology-Westcoast Women in Rhyme* and the *Westcoast Poetry Festival Compilation*.

Marilyn Forgues

Marilyn Forgues grew up on the outskirts of Quebec City in the small village of Château-Richer on Côte-de-Beaupré. As a child she was drawn to the performing arts. She began as a dancer with a local group and then joined a theatre group as an actor. At the same time, she started her apprenticeship in the visual arts and it is in this area that she continued her college studies. She uses many techniques and likes to fuse many genres. Her favorite techniques are serigraphy, printing, water colour and acrylic painting, using

clay and wire and drawing with chalk pastels. Her style is personal and she does not publicly display her work. She now has a teaching position and shares her passion for visual arts with her students. She also gives theatre workshops to students 15 to 17 years of age. Marilyn hopes to carve out a place for herself in the arts and plans on making it a life-long occupation.

Montgomery Hall

A visual artist in St. John's, Montgomery paints his world loud. His leitmotiv is art in the street, accessible to all. Through schools, workshops and partnerships, he personifies the commitment of the artist to his community. In the past Montgomery has worked as Gallery Coordinator for Eastern Edge Gallery, Youth Producer for the national project Terminus1525 and as Assistant Producer for MediaJamtv.com. He has sat on the Board of Directors at Eastern Edge, shown his work locally, nationally and internationally, and put together the first Newfoundland Graffiti Jam, Color our Community Mural Project and Freeway – a youth art magazine. Currently he sits on the Board of Directors for the Independent Artist Cooperative, Rock Can Roll Records and Edge Inter-Media and is working on a multi-media collaborative project with artists from Halifax and Sackville and the Independent Artist Cooperative (St. John's). He is the peer mentor to 10 students through The Brother T. I. Murphy Center - Community Youth Arts Project.

Janelle Hardy

Janelle Hardy, 27, is from the Yukon. Her main interests are culture, identity, the arts, and everything that encompasses them - which she would argue is everything else. These interests have been informed through her various studies, travels and life experience. She has made forays 'outside' to study (BA Anthropology, MA Dance), and to travel (Japan with Rotary International, Russia/Ontario with Canada World Youth, Cuba and Barbados on her own, and Halifax, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Edmonton, Vancouver and everywhere between within Canada). She is a single mother of a 3-year-old, which has had a huge impact on her views regarding education, poverty, and access to the arts. Janelle is now home in the Yukon on a more permanent basis. She is currently working many jobs to try to keep a roof over her head, and is trying to incorporate art making and creating into that equation.

Amy Haysom

Amy is the Youth Global Liaison at the Centre for Global Studies, University of Victoria. Since 2002 she has been active in international affairs, focused on effectively implementing youth voice in policy-making. In 2002 she worked with hilltribe child and youth rights in Thailand through the Institute for Child Rights and Development, coordinated youth at the 2003 Unicef/Plan International Southeast Asia Birth Registration Conference, has led youth to an international peace conference in Hungary, and was

speaker at the Global Quest for Peace in Bali 2004 with Nobel peace laureate, Desmond Tutu. She currently teaches humanities part-time in North Vancouver, while studying/training in World Dance and performance as a means to facilitate peaceful intercultural communication.

Spencer Herbert

Spencer Herbert is currently Associate Producer of the UN World Urban Forum Earth Village Festival with Judith Marcuse Projects. As a community developer with the Roundhouse Community Centre, Leaky Heaven Circus, and the Vancouver East Cultural Centre Spencer believes in building community through the arts. Recently elected to the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation Spencer is excited about the opportunities for increasing youth involvement, and arts in Vancouver. In demand as a facilitator and lecturer, Spencer has worked with Better Environmentally Sound Transportation, The Sierra Club, BC Civil Liberties, and the Gay and Lesbian Centre to build inclusive, healthy, and active communities.

WeiHsi Hu

WeiHsi has been involved in communities since 1995. He started as an HIV/AIDS Educator of the Asian Society for the Intervention of AIDS, the only ethnic-specific HIV/AIDS non-profit organization in western Canada, and then continued to work with other community organizations on diversity and inclusion issues in Vancouver. His work with the Environmental Youth Alliance allowed him to expand his skills as a community developer supporting the diverse youth communities to reach their own goals using participatory action research tools. He is currently working on his Master of Music degree majoring Choral Conducting at the University of Alberta, and he is also the Youth Observer on the Executive Committee of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO.

Claire Kelly

Claire is a 19-year-old First Nations youth who has spent most of her life in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Born Clairissa Jane Kelly, she originally comes from the Peguis First Nation which is located approximately 120 km north of Winnipeg. She is an aspiring young artist with over 8 years experience in acting. She has appeared in films such as *Styker* and *The JJ Harper Story: Cowboys and Indians* and has been the lead in many RB Russell High School productions. In 1998, she had the pleasure of working with Winnipeg artists Ian Ross, Tina Keeper, Columpa C. Bobb, and Jan Skene in the Manitoba Theatre for Young People's production of *The Rememberer*. Currently she is on a leave of absence from her job as Administrative Assistant for The Aboriginal Arts Training Program at Manitoba Theatre for Young People to be a part of an exciting new series called: *Next! A Series for Aboriginal Youth* which will air on APTN next fall. Topics she will be exploring are Panhandling, Guns, and Police. Claire has seen firsthand the struggles that youth face

today. Her goal one day is to write an autobiography about her experiences growing up in the Inner City. Claire has spoken on issues such as Type 2 Diabetes Prevention, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, and Violence.

Sara Kendall

Sara Kendall is a facilitator of arts-based and empowerment- focused processes. Much of her work is dedicated to youth-oriented and youth-driven initiatives; all of her work comes from a passion for joining creative expression with personal development in the context of supportive community. Sara coordinates *A People's Project*; the Vancouver Child and Youth Rights Monitoring initiative, and *Peer Perspectives*, a project of the Access to Media Education Society that utilizes story-telling media created by youth of colour, First Nations youth and queer youth in participatory anti-racism and anti-homophobia workshops for youth and educators. Some other organizations that Sara facilitates with include: *Momentum*, an urban arts empowerment and social change facilitation collective; *Power of Hope*, inter-cultural/generational arts-centered awareness and empowerment multi-day programs for youth; *Projections*, mentorship partnering professionals from the film & television industry with street-involved youth in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, and *Diversity through Hip Hop*, self-discovery and education workshops with incarcerated youth. Sara's practice in circus, spoken word and music inform her work on all levels; she is dedicated to continual learning, and looks forward to more sharing, playing, thinking, and making... an open invitation!

Sharon Kour

Sharon Kour is a fourth-year student at Trinity College in the University of Toronto, currently pursuing an Honours Bachelor of Arts joint degree in International Relations, Asia Pacific studies and English. She co-founded the MusicBox Children's Charity in 2002 and currently serves as the Chairperson of the Board for the Charity. The Charity's mandate is to aid in the social, academic and emotional development of underprivileged children through the use of a structured classical music education. The Charity also provides accessible role models for underprivileged children in the form of its youth volunteers. Sharon's interest in the welfare of socially and financially underprivileged children stems primarily from her volunteerism with lower-income, mentally-challenged children in Vancouver. As an immigrant to Canada, she has experienced the social difficulties that accompany relocation, and thus feels that equality in educational opportunities should be granted to all children, regardless of social, mental or economic standing. Sharon looks forward to pursuing a Law degree with a concentration in social advocacy after her undergraduate studies.

Danika Billie Littlechild

Danika is the Youth Representative on the Sectoral Commission on Culture, Communication and Information with the Canadian Commission for UNESCO. She was a member of the Ad Hoc Committee for the development of the Youth Sector within CCUNESCO, and most recently was a member of the Official Canadian Delegation to the World Summit on the Information Society, held in Tunis on November 16-18, 2005. She is a member of the drafting group for the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism, which was launched by the CCUNESCO in January 2005. Danika Billie is currently a Board Member of the Northern Alberta Alliance Against Racism. She is also a member of the Aboriginal Advisory Committee for Learning Through the Arts, Royal Conservatory of Music. Danika Billie has worked extensively with Indigenous Youth in Canada, most notably in the area of communication and information as a volunteer for the Aboriginal Youth Network, a website catering to Aboriginal Youth in Canada. Danika is currently practicing law on her home reserve of Hobbema, Alberta. She works with Indigenous clients, and her practice is centred around Indigenous governance, not-for-profit and charities, corporate/commercial and pro bono work.

Charlotte Lombardo

Charlotte Lombardo is project coordinator for TeenNet research, based in the department of Public Health Sciences at the University of Toronto. TeenNet is a participatory research programme which uses media arts to engage young people in community action and health promotion. TeenNet's current projects are centred on our Global Youth Voices model, which uses interactive media, such as art and photography, to empower young people in issue identification and collective action (www.globalyouthvoices.org). As part of this work we use a teens in action/youth-driven approach to address specific issues, such as tobacco control (www.smokingzine.org). TeenNet is currently using new technologies to engage young people in Canada, South Africa, and the Middle East. TeenNet is also partnering with Taking IT Global (www.takingitglobal.org) to develop interactive virtual classrooms on HIV/AIDS prevention and tobacco control.

Erin MacLeod

Erin is a teacher, writer, student and editor. At Vanier College in Montreal, she is the assistant co-ordinator of the English department, where she helps with administrative duties, but also to develop programmes to improve the students' performance. Her focus lies in trying to develop innovative, interdisciplinary ideas to encourage student interest. Erin is particularly interested in the importance of the arts to all facets of education. Her favourite literature to teach is writing from the Caribbean. As a PhD student at McGill, her research involves the relationship between popular Jamaican music, religion and society. Since she loves reggae, Erin also works as a reggae journalist for the *Montreal Mirror* and has edited several books on the topic. She also enjoys travelling and volunteer

as a team leader with Habitat for Humanity, leading teams of volunteers to work with communities in Guyana and Ethiopia.

Jesse Martin

Jesse Martin will be completing his BFA Acting degree from the University of Alberta in Edmonton this spring. His work there has included performing plays by Shaw, Shakespeare, Arthur Miller, and Sarah Kane. In the summer of 2004, Jesse worked for the Alberta Foundation for the Arts in their joint project with the Alberta Sports, Recreation, Parks, and Wildlife Federation called Alberta's Future Leaders. As a part of this program, he traveled to six indigenous communities and conducted week-long intensive art and drama day camps that strove to help develop youth leadership and self-expression through the arts. This past summer, Jesse traveled to Boulder, Colorado, with funding from the Roger S. Smith Research Scholarship. There, he spent seven weeks documenting Prof. Betty Moulton's work at the Colorado Shakespeare Festival as Voice Coach. He also traveled to Prince Edward Island to perform in the world premiere of *Anne and Gilbert*, a new Canadian musical based on the *Anne of Green Gables* books. Jesse is native to Ottawa and attended Bell High School where his passion for theatre was inspired by performing in the annual musical and representing the school at the Canadian Improv Games.

Sarah Miller

Sarah Miller is an independent radio producer who strives to blur the boundaries between media and art. She is currently developing several youth radio projects with young people in her new home - Halifax - and is motivated by a strong belief that youth need tools to tell their stories and document the world from their own perspective. She recently finished a semester in Radio Documentary Studies at the Salt Institute for Documentary Studies in Maine and is excited to bring her passion for sound, storytelling, and the spoken word to the communities she works with. Sarah also works for the HeartWood Centre for Community Youth Development, a Halifax-based organization that works with young people, agencies, and communities across Nova Scotia to support meaningful youth participation in efforts to build strong communities. Sarah's long-term goal is to open a community-based media arts centre that will teach audio, video and new media skills to people of all ages and will be a forum for the documentation and dissemination of the community's stories.

Alice Miro

Alice recently completed a BSc in Integrated Sciences (Ecology, Geography, and Economics) from the University of BC. She worked for several years at the UBC Sustainability Office, writing project proposals, consulting the public on social, economic and ecological issues, and involving neighbours, businesses, academics and students in

the sustainability of our communities. As a volunteer, she has been involved in initiatives ranging from participatory rural appraisal in the Amazon forest, to urban agriculture in Vancouver. For the past four years, she has been involved with the UBC Food Co-operative, a student-run social enterprise providing the UBC community with affordable, ecologically and socially responsible food, as well as education about health and sustainability. She recently joined the Board of Directors of the Youth Environmental Network, a national organisation based in Ottawa, as well as The Food Project BLAST Cadre, a North-America-wide youth leadership network focusing on the implementation of policies and programs that promote access to healthy food. Since September 2004, she has been working at the UBC Learning Exchange, a community engagement initiative in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. Alice coordinates strategic initiatives such as arts-related projects in schools that connect inner city children and youth with UBC students.

Tahirih Naylor

Tahirih Naylor is a lawyer who was called to the Bar in 2004 after receiving a Bachelors degree in sociology and focusing on international and human rights law in her legal studies. Before attending university, Tahirih took a year off to participate in a dance theatre workshop called Diversity Dance Theatre. This group travelled to Eastern and Western Europe performing on issues such as racism, drug abuse, domestic violence, multiculturalism and others. The group performed in schools, community centers, refugee camps and public squares encouraging dialogue and social change at the grassroots level. Tahirih has continued to work with youth groups in Canada and was a founding member of Wildfire Dance Theatre, a performing arts group which travels and performs on similar issues in North, Central and South America. She has worked and travelled in over 25 countries and is currently a Representative of the Office of Governmental Relations for the Bahá'í Community of Canada. Her areas of work currently include freedom of religion, the right to education, and sustainable development.

Matt Robinson

Matt Robinson is a native of Halifax, NS, who has worked in Residential Life at the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton, NB since 1999. A graduate of Saint Mary's, MSVU, and UNB, Matt is actively involved with Writers in the Schools programs in both New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, and has facilitated numerous creative writing workshops. A poetry editor at The Fiddlehead, Robinson has also served as both NB and PEI Regional Rep and President of The League of Canadian Poets. Robinson's poetry has received numerous awards, including The Petra Kenney International Poetry Prize. His most recent collection, *no cage contains a stare that well* (ECW, 2005), is a full-length volume of hockey poems. Recipient of The NB Foundation for the Arts' Emerging Artist of the Year Award, his poems have appeared on radio and television, in numerous Canadian, American, British, and Australian publications, as well as in anthologies such as *The New Canon* (Vehicule, 2005), *Breathing Fire 2* (Nightwood,

2004), *Literature: A Pocket Anthology* (Pearson, 2004), and *Coastlines: The Poetry of Atlantic Canada* (Goose Lane, 2002). Robinson's previous collections include *A Ruckus of Awkward Stacking* (2001), *how we play at it: a list* (2002), and *tracery & interplay* (2004).

Samantha Smith

Born in Kingston, Ontario, Canada, in 1982, Samantha Smith is a recent Magna Cum Laude graduate of Canada's University of Ottawa, with an Honours B.A. in Communications and a Concentration in Theatre. Over the past three years, Samantha has worked in retail, tourism and restaurant businesses, while remaining actively involved in theatre. She is currently working at Ikea Ottawa, and volunteering for the Canadian Conference of the Arts and ArtsSmarts. In 2006, Samantha will be working abroad for a year in New Zealand and Australia. It is her hope that she will learn about the rich diversity of both countries in order to enhance her own understanding of national identity, as Samantha hopes to build a career in promoting Canadian arts and culture. She is very enthusiastic about sharing tales of Canada's rich history and it's aspirations for the future, and it is her hope that attaining work experience abroad will enhance her own intercultural education.

Shawn Thériault

Shawn Thériault is a percussionist working for the organization *ICI par les Arts*, a non-profit organization which works in the area of community and social arts and arts education. One of the aims of this organization is to offer schools an opportunity to celebrate the arts, integrate art activities in the curriculum and encourage students to develop their intellectual abilities by participating actively in the arts. *ICI par les arts* has been mandated by The Canadian Conference for the Arts through the McConnell Foundation to supervise and coordinate artistic projects that ArtsSmarts has initiated in the Laurentians. <http://www.iciparlesarts.com/intro.html>

Inouk Touzin

Director, actor, writer, lighting designer, teacher, Inouk loves theatre. He holds an honours degree in theatre from the University of Ottawa and has been active in Ontario, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British-Columbia and Taiwan. He is currently writing his first play, *Inc.*, and has just directed the reading of *La Danse des 7 voiles* in Toronto. His previous accomplishments include: *Jesus Lives*, (Lead) an outdoor theatre play in Saskatchewan, *5 ans* (stage manager and lighting designer) a new play performed in Saskatchewan and Alberta, *Jean et Béatrice* (directing workshop), which won the *Franco-Canadian Production Award* from the prestigious *soirée des masques*. Inouk has also been teaching drama in workshops and classrooms for over 10 years. He has worked with over fifty schools and organizations, and has taught with thousands of participants.

Jean-Louis Yabamba Kabasele

Jean-Louis Yabamba Kabasele was born in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). He completed his high school diploma in Kitambo at Collège Saint-Georges. Jean-Louis worked with youth theatre groups and choirs in Kitambo. He arrived in Canada in 2005 and started work as a volunteer with *Alliance Jeunesse-Famille de l'Alberta Society (AJFAS)*. His main role was to structure cultural and recreational activities for youth ages 10 to 15. Many of these activities are organized in partnership with other community groups such as the *Centre de développement musical*. In August 2005, Jean-Louis Yabamba Kabasele was responsible for organizing an international youth day for Programme d'Action Mondial pour la Jeunesse dealing specifically with 10 identified areas of the UN. His present work includes initiating 10 to 12 year olds into the world of traditional stories and legends. Jean-Louis Yabamba Kabasele is a member of l'Alliance Jeunesse-Famille de l'Alberta Society, of l'Association multiculturelle francophone and of the Edmonton Congolese Community.