



OTTAWA ARTS COUNCIL / ARTS NETWORK OTTAWA

CREATING A NEW ARTS SERVICE ORGANIZATION
IN OTTAWA

**TESTING THE PROTOTYPE
WITH OTTAWA'S ARTS LEADERS**

JUNE 05, 2023





Introduction

On June 5th, 2023, the Ottawa Arts Council and Arts Network Ottawa held a breakfast session with 85 arts leaders to test the prototype for a new merged arts service organization.

The following report provides the background on the prototype development process and a summary of the feedback received from the arts leaders.

Background

The merger of the Ottawa Arts Council and the Ottawa Arts Network marks a pivotal moment in the evolution of the Ottawa arts sector today, and presented a strategic opportunity to re-evaluate and redefine organizational and governance structures.

The central question in the development of the new model was:

What did we learn from the pandemic and how can this help us build a healthier arts community now?

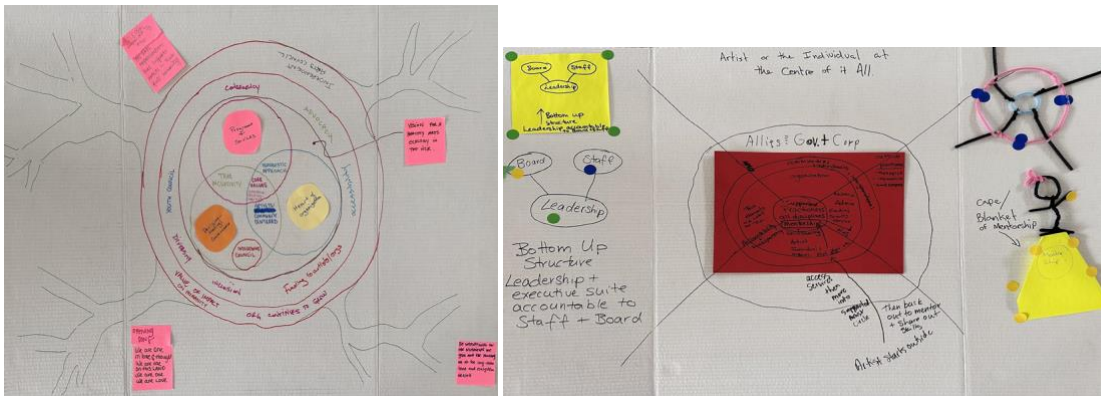
- Understand the nature of the challenge now
- Recreate shared purpose
- Work with community strengths
- Collaborate to achieve shared purpose
- Create collaborative governance

Prototype Development

The development of the model has been a product of rigorous research and collaboration, with a central emphasis on the active involvement of Ottawa's arts sector and community members. Drawing from survey data and insights gathered through community conversations, participants at co-creation labs identified priorities and developed innovative prototypes for the envisioned new organization.

Furthermore, the integration of established frameworks in social innovation, such as the Constellation Model and the Collective Impact Model, have added depth and clarity to this strategic approach, reinforcing the direction of this transformative initiative.

OAC / ANO MERGER



In essence, this transformative model embodies a strategic and deliberate approach to governance and collaboration within the arts sector. It represents a commitment to excellence, innovation, and responsiveness, positioning the merged entity as a leader in fostering sustainable growth and resilience within the Ottawa arts community.

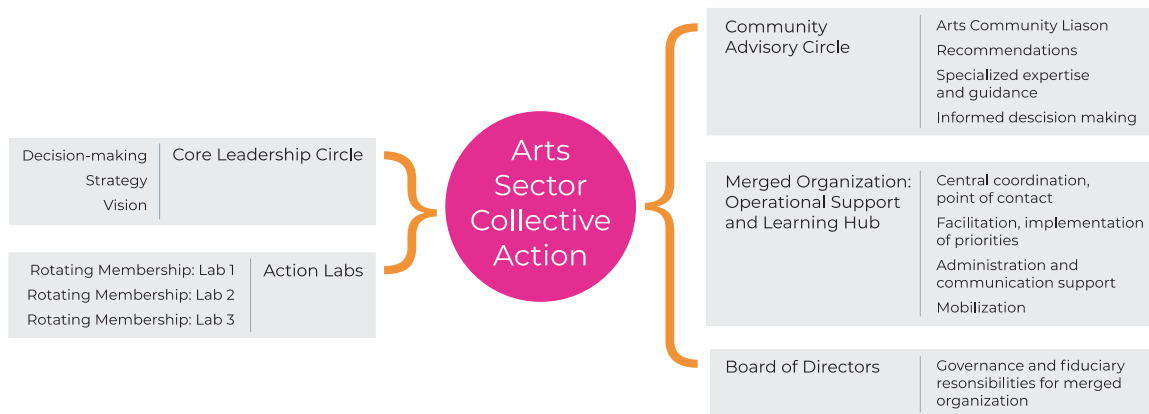


The Prototype

The purpose of the new Ottawa arts service organization is to:

Drive collective action in responding to community needs and priorities, fostering a thriving arts sector.

In order to do this, the prototype was designed to better respond to community input and co-design.



Core Elements

- Structured to promote collective leadership and shared decision-making.
- Operates based on equity, collaboration and co-created values.
- Designed to collaborate beyond our own boundaries to achieve sector outcomes, generate collective action and distribute power
- Requires shared knowledge and research, well-defined processes and effective communication methods



Impact on Current Organizational and Governance Structure

The transition to the proposed model necessitates a re-evaluation of the existing governance structure to align with the principles of collaboration, autonomy, and shared purpose.

Here are some key impacts:

1. Shift from Centralized to Distributed Decision-making

The traditional centralized governance structure may evolve into a distributed model where decision-making authority is shared. Rather than a single governing body overseeing all operations, governance responsibilities are shared with the Core Leadership Circle with the organization providing coordination and support.

2. Inclusivity and Participation

The new model emphasizes inclusivity and participation, ensuring that diverse voices and perspectives are represented in decision-making processes. Governance structures would incorporate mechanisms for input from the Advisory Circle and Action Labs comprising of artists, cultural practitioners, community members, and other relevant stakeholders.

3. Flexibility and Adaptability

The new governance structure prioritizes flexibility and adaptability to respond effectively to changing needs and opportunities within the arts sector. It allows for the creation of action labs, and working groups to address specific issues or initiatives, fostering agility and innovation.

FROM	TO
Organizations	Outcomes
Management	Mobilization
Me	We
Expert	Explorer
Delivery	Co-creation
Expectations	Agency
Head	Heart



Participatory Feedback on the Prototype

Using the online platform, Mentimeter and a feedback grid, participants provided feedback anonymously on the prototype and were able to see the collective results in real-time.

Summary of Feedback

This consolidated analysis provides a clear understanding of why participants favored the new model, highlighting its strengths and potential for positive impact on the community and the arts sector.

Q: What do you like about the prototype?

1. **Inclusivity and Participation:** It ensures that a diverse range of voices are heard and included in decision-making processes.
2. **Community-Centric Approach:** The model is led by the community and grounded in collaboration, responding effectively to community needs and interests.
3. **Equity and Transparency:** It fosters a fair and open environment, promoting equity and transparency in all its processes.
4. **Innovation and Flexibility:** The model is adaptable and encourages innovative thinking and experimental approaches.
5. **Collaborative Decision-Making:** Decision-making is participatory and involves those who are most impacted by the decisions.
6. **Focus on Outcomes and Efficiency:** There is a strong emphasis on achieving tangible results and efficiency, including resource savings.
7. **Re-evaluation and Continuous Improvement:** The model includes mechanisms for continuous improvement, ensuring its ongoing relevance and effectiveness.
8. **Artist-Centric and Empowering:** It is focused on supporting and empowering artists, ensuring their active involvement in the process.



Based on the analysis of the questions provided, here are the key themes and top 10 questions from the participants:

Key Themes

1. **Inclusivity and Accessibility**
2. **Operational Clarity**
3. **Accountability and Governance**
4. **Sustainability and Funding**
5. **Community Engagement**
6. **Decision-Making Processes**
7. **Effectiveness and Efficiency**
8. **Community Impact**
9. **Leadership and Coordination**
10. **Evaluation and Success Metrics**

Top 10 Questions

1. **Inclusivity and Accessibility:**
 - How can it be more inclusive and accessible?
2. **Operational Clarity:**
 - How does it work?
 - What is the mission?
3. **Accountability and Governance:**
 - Who is accountable in this new model?
 - Who is ultimately responsible for getting the work done?
 - How will final decisions be made?
4. **Sustainability and Funding:**
 - How will the new organization demonstrate a long funding history to its funders?
 - Who is funding it?
5. **Community Engagement:**
 - How will it engage every community?
 - What steps can be taken to avoid a slow retreat back to old modes of operating?
6. **Decision-Making Processes:**
 - How do you ensure that legally, the Board fulfills its responsibilities in this new decentralized model?
 - How will community participation be encouraged and compensated?



7. **Effectiveness and Efficiency:**

- How will you ensure sustainable contributions from the community?
- How do you take action/how do you choose what to take action on?

8. **Community Impact:**

- How will this work? How will the people who will benefit from the funding have their voices heard and be involved in the decisions?
- How will you manage all the needs of all the artists and organizations through this model?

9. **Leadership and Coordination:**

- What does leadership look like within the new structure, while recognizing it is intended to be shared?
- Who is in charge?

10. **Evaluation and Success Metrics:**

- How will we measure success?
- What are the first clear objectives the organization has? (3-5 years)

Q: What will be different in your work/life if this model is a success?

Analysis of Key Changes

The analysis of the provided feedback data reveals several key changes that participants expect if the new organizational and governance model is successful. These changes can be consolidated into the following themes:

1. Financial Sustainability and Support

- Sustainable local funding and arts sector funding support for organizations in Ottawa.
- Increased and sustainable operating funding to deliver on missions.
- Ability to provide consistent, engaged arts experiences each season in Ottawa.
- More opportunities for partnerships and meaningful collaborations outside the new organization.



2. Community Engagement and Inclusion

- Arts are visible and flourishing in and around the city.
- Ottawa's community value and engage in the arts more than residents of any other Canadian city.
- Improved quality of life for residents thanks to the social and economic impact of community-engaged arts.
- Ample opportunities to co-create in Ottawa with diverse artists and community groups.
- Inviting disengaged community members into a care-focused, inclusive environment.

3. Advocacy and Visibility

- Strong advocacy at all levels of government.
- A loud, informed voice that truly represents the arts sector will mean more funding, more opportunities, more impact.
- Exceptional visibility across Ottawa and comfortable reliance on audience and funder support.

4. Professional Development and Resources

- Professional development opportunities.
- Self-expression without compromise.
- Access to resources and support.
- Hub for networking and professional development.
- Arts and culture workers of all levels earn a living wage.

5. Infrastructure and Facilities

- Affordable artist studios in Ottawa.
- Gallery 101 would have a permanent facility.
- Creating access, protocols, and opportunities for disabled artistic professionals.
- New arts hub at 10:10 Somerset that houses multiple organizations.

6. Cultural Integration and Influence

- Arts are central to the wellbeing of communities around the city.
- Arts are integrated into all Ottawans' everyday life.
- Improved relationship with the City of Ottawa and raising the needs of the arts community.
- Community + art = meaningful positive societal transformation.



7. Equity and Representation

- Increased diverse leadership in Ottawa's art community.
- We will become a mid-size cultural organization that continues to serve IBPOC and newcomer artists.
- Removed barriers and boundaries between art artists and traditionally excluded communities.

8. Collaboration and Partnerships

- Partnership and collaboration as the new muscle.
- Artists are invited to collaborate with non-arts organizations and communities.
- New alliances, partnerships, and projects that benefit the culturally diverse community.

Outcomes Exercise

Based on the key changes identified, EVOKE has developed a set of corresponding outcomes that the new organization could strive for:

1. Financial Sustainability and Support

- **Outcome:** Achieve financial sustainability for the sector through consistent local funding and diversified income sources.

2. Community Engagement and Inclusion

- **Outcome:** Foster a vibrant, inclusive, and engaged arts community where arts are visible and valued by all residents of Ottawa.

3. Advocacy and Visibility

- **Outcome:** Strengthen advocacy efforts to secure more funding and support, ensuring that the arts sector is prominently represented and heard at all levels of government.

4. Professional Development and Resources

- **Outcome:** Provide ample professional development opportunities and resources to support the growth and success of artists and arts workers, ensuring they can earn a living wage and pursue their careers sustainably.

5. Infrastructure and Facilities

- **Outcome:** Develop and maintain affordable, accessible facilities and spaces for artists to create, perform, and exhibit their work, including permanent homes for key arts organizations.



6. Cultural Integration and Influence

- **Outcome:** Integrate the arts into the daily lives of all Ottawa residents, recognizing and promoting the arts as central to community wellbeing and societal transformation.

7. Equity and Representation

- **Outcome:** Ensure diverse leadership and equitable representation within the arts community, actively supporting IBPOC, newcomer artists, and traditionally excluded groups.

8. Collaboration and Partnerships

- **Outcome:** Cultivate strong collaborations and partnerships between arts and non-arts organizations, fostering new alliances and projects that benefit the broader community.