



## BC Everyday Creativity & COVID-19 Research Report 2021

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# **Part 1: Introduction**

## **Executive Summary**

This report examines the ways in which BC residents turned to creative activities during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study uses a broad definition of creative activities, with examples including listening to music, trying a new recipe, reading a book, making crafts, taking dance classes, watching movies or TV, viewing a live show, learning a language, attending an art gallery and more.

The study concludes that, during the pandemic, BC residents valued the positive impact of creative activities on their mental health, particularly residents who identified as female, living with a disability, or living below the median income level. Moreover, our study showed that arts organizations across BC worked through the pandemic with the specific aim of supporting their community's wellbeing by offering public programs such as affordable arts-based childcare, online singing groups, or outdoor gatherings, and that these programs were considered a lifeline to various communities. Finally, the study suggests that cultural policies and practices in BC might be democratized by shifting to enable and provide wider access to arts-based initiatives that support community wellbeing.

## **Acknowledgements**

This report was written in Vancouver, BC, on the unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh nations. While this study does not bring Indigenous and settler

relations into the centre of the research, and the number of Indigenous research participants included in this study is considered to be representative, it is clear that more work is needed to widely enable settler-led cultural organizations in BC to support Indigenous sovereignty over their culture.

Moreover, this report acknowledges ongoing calls from IBPOC/BIPOC artists and organizations, such as the Vancouver BIPOC Creative Association, to reclaim space and provide greater equity within the cultural sector for IBPOC/BIPOC artists. In addition, in BC, there is a need for continued advocacy for artists living with disabilities and for making the arts sector more accessible overall. While this study does not make use of slow and collaborative research practices needed to bring-about more radical transformations of the arts sector, we have responded quickly to the COVID-19 crisis and have collected meaningful stories as well as data about how a range of BC residents engage in everyday creativity. By examining how specific groups of BC residents engaged in creative activities, rather than looking only at artists' experience of COVID, we bring a commitment to cultural democracy to the forefront. Cultural democracy can be defined as “a state in which everyone feels empowered to actively participate in” cultural activity (Arts Council England and 64 Million Artists, 2018). The concept of cultural democracy might be one route into building a more accessible and equitable arts sector in BC.

Finally, we acknowledge, with gratitude, the participation of over 500 BC residents and 40 arts organizations who took part in this study, as well as the support of Mitacs, Simon Fraser University and the BC Arts Council. On the whole, our interviews show that while BC arts organizations have faced notable challenges throughout the pandemic, many organizations have shown their resilience, their compassion, their dedication and – this should come as no surprise –

their abundant creativity in responding to COVID-19. We are grateful for their important work and thank all participants in this research initiative.

## Research Questions

This study asks two key questions

1. How did BC residents use creativity and the arts during the COVID-19 pandemic?

To answer this question, we created and distributed a survey to a representative sample of the BC population, as will be described further below.

2. How did arts organizations support their communities during the COVID-19 pandemic? To answer this question, our team interviewed 40 arts organizations based across the seven regions of BC.

This report begins by outlining the methodologies and results of both parts of the research project, and then brings together findings of the survey and interviews within the discussion sections. Finally, the report presents recommendations for government, funders and other stakeholders.

## Part 2: BC General Population Survey Report

### Survey Methodology

In January 2021, the BC Alliance for Arts and Culture, with the support of Nanos Research, distributed a general population survey to a representative sample of more than 500 adult residents of British Columbia. The survey focused on the role of creative activities in the lives of BC residents before and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The survey asked:

- Do BC residents view themselves as being creative?
- Do BC residents value creativity in their everyday lives?
- How can artists and communities work together to support everyday creativity in BC?
- Do BC residents turn to arts and culture to support their wellbeing?

The survey closed in early February 2021, and Nanos Research provided the BC Alliance with cross tabulations of the survey data for our analysis. The answers provided were also analyzed by how respondents self-identified with respect to gender, age, income level, ethnicity, migration status, geographic location and other factors. The survey findings outlined below reflect the responses provided by the public, and also highlight how certain groups diverged from the general public in some of their responses.

## Survey Findings

### **1. BC residents have spent more time engaged in creative activities during the pandemic.**

The survey data showed that during the COVID-19 pandemic, BC residents spent more time engaged in creative activities than usual. Before the pandemic, the median number of hours BC residents engaged in creative activities was five hours per week. During the pandemic, that number increased to eight hours per week.

### **2. BC residents engaged in creative activities during the pandemic to support their mental health.**

During the pandemic, the reasons BC residents engaged in creative activities shifted with more people getting creative as a means to support their mental health. Before the pandemic, the

two most important reasons BC residents engaged in creative activities were to “Have fun” (36%) and to “Experience new things” (21%), and only 12% of BC residents thought the most important reason for engaging in creative activities was to support their mental health. While “having fun” continued to be the most important reason during the pandemic, this percentage dropped considerably to 26.7% and “improving mental health” took second place at 24%. In other words, during the pandemic, double the number of BC residents turned to creativity to support their mental health.

These results can be seen across different population subgroups as well. Before the pandemic, by contrast to the 12% of the general population who selected “Improving my mental health” as the most important reason for engaging in creative activities, 23% of those who self-identified as living with a disability, as well as 24% of new parents, selected the same response. During the pandemic, this number increased 26% for both those who live with disability and new parents.

Getting creative to support mental health was also particularly important for those who self-reported as living below BC’s median income level. Amongst this group, 15% turned to creative activities to support their mental health before the pandemic, while 28% did the same during the pandemic. Participants in this group selected their mental health above all other reasons for engaging in creative activities during the pandemic.

One notable outlier in the survey was residents who self-identified as being of Chinese descent, who said they were equally likely to engage in creative activities before and after the pandemic to support their physical health. Before the pandemic, only 9% of the general population viewed improving their physical health as being the most important reason to engaged in creative activities, while 16% of people who self-identified as being of Chinese

decent believed the same. During the pandemic, 6.8% of the general population viewed improving their physical health as being the most important reason to engaged in creative activities, while 16% of people who self-identified as being of Chinese descent felt the same.

**3. Those who valued creative activities the most before and during the pandemic are people who self-identified as living below BC’s median income level, living with a disability, as well as those who identify as female and parents.**

Creative engagement during the pandemic was not reserved for professional artists and BC’s most resourced residents. Rather, during the pandemic, those who were most likely to highly value creativity were those who self-identified as living below the median income level, as well as people who self-identified as female, parents, and those living with a disability. Amongst the general population, only 28% of respondents who self-identified as male identified creative activities as being highly important before the pandemic, compared to 35% during the pandemic. By contrast, during the pandemic, 55% of respondents who self-identified as female viewed creative activities as being highly important, alongside 53% who are parents, 47% of those who reported earning less than the median income, and 38% of people living with disability.

**4. One in five BC residents viewed themselves as being creative.**

Across BC’s general population, and during the pandemic, approximately 21% answered: “Yes, I’m creative”. Those who viewed themselves as being more creative were people who self-identified as living with a disability (30%), parents with more than one child (29%), younger residents between the ages of 18-34 (27%), those living below the median income level (26%)



and people who identify as female (25%). As will be discussed further in this paper, Indigenous respondents were also more likely to view themselves as being creative (34%).

### **5. BC residents would engage in creative activities more frequently if they had more money and more interest in available activities.**

During the pandemic, BC residents explained that they would be more likely to engage in creative activities if they had more time, more money, greater access and more interest in the activities offered. The top two factors that would make respondents more interested in pursuing creative activities were having more activities that are free (27%) and activities that are more interesting and relevant to their lives (26%). Parents were particularly hopeful for more affordable or free creativity programs (36%). In addition, people who had migrated to Canada (34%), as well as people living with disabilities (32%), would be more motivated to participate if they felt a greater connection to the creative activities available to them.

### **6. Indigenous participation in creative activities differed from the general public before and during the pandemic.**

This survey asked participants whether they identify as being Indigenous. The weighted sample for this question included 500 respondents, and 31 of those, or 6.2% of the sample, identified as being Indigenous. In the 2016 Statistics Canada survey, 5.9% of BC population identified as being Indigenous, which means our survey sample is representative of the general BC population. While generalizing from a small sample may not produce representative results, it is important to highlight the responses given by Indigenous participants within this study, especially since many responses differed significantly from the general population.

Indigenous participants in this study tended to highly value creativity before the pandemic (47%), with a small increase during the pandemic (48%). Indigenous participants viewed themselves as being creative (34%), and Indigenous participants in the study have a higher median number of hours each week spent being creative each both before the pandemic (10 hours) and the same during the pandemic (10 hours). In addition, few Indigenous participants selected supporting their mental health as a key reason for turning to creativity prior to the pandemic (3%) and during the pandemic (17.4%). Responses provided by Indigenous participants to the survey questions diverged from the general population, which further underscores the importance of enabling Indigenous sovereignty over their culture.

#### **7. Participation in virtual creative activities increased during the pandemic.**

According to our survey, before the pandemic, 22% of BC residents engaged in virtual creative activities such as attending online shows, exhibitions, concerts or art classes. During the pandemic, 34% of BC residents took part in online creative activities. With respect to online participation in creative activities, however, there were slightly fewer participants amongst those who have lower than average income before the pandemic (18%) and during the pandemic (32%). In addition, people who self-identified as living with disabilities were slightly more likely to participate in online creative activities before the pandemic (25%) and during the pandemic (36%).

## **Part 3: Organizational Interviews Report**

### **Interview Methodology**

Between August 2020 and May 2021, the BC Alliance engaged in conversations with politicians, arts organizations and artists across BC. Our conversations focused primarily on the state of the arts sector during the COVID-19 pandemic, with a particular interest in how arts organizations have supported their communities through the pandemic. Amongst those conversations, we engaged in a formal interview-based research process with arts organizations across the seven regions of BC. There were 95 arts organizations invited to participate in an interview, and they were selected based on geographic location, and to represent a range of artistic disciplines, size, ages and mandates. Ultimately, 40 arts organizations participated in interviews: 13 from the Lower Mainland, 10 in Vancouver Island and Coast, 6 in Cariboo Region, 4 in Kootenay Regions, 1 in Northeast, 4 in Thompson-Okanagan, and 2 in North Coast and Nechako.

It should be noted that while this research project intended to include a range of organizations in interviews, the interview process was biased towards arts organizations that were in a sufficiently stable position to be able to accept an interview. In general, organizations that were struggling would not have volunteered their time to talk to a researcher. This research project only included two arts organizations that were struggling significantly, and it is likely that had we been able to connect with other struggling organizations, the results in our report would be substantially different. Nonetheless, sharing the stories of organizations who did find some success is also important in helping to create pathways for arts organizations and supporting the field overall. In that sense, this section of the report mostly shares stories of resilience within the arts sector during the pandemic period.

In order to protect the anonymity of the research participants, the report presents the big ideas discussed during the interviews on the whole, without raising specific details about each

discussion. Anonymized, note-form transcriptions of the interviews are available upon request from the BC Alliance for Arts and Culture.

## Interview Findings

### **1. All of the participating arts organizations that offered public programs had to cancel some or all of their programs during the COVID-19 Pandemic.**

Almost all of the arts organizations interviewed offered public programs before the COVID-19 pandemic, and all of those organizations had to cancel all or some of their programs due to public health orders. Only one of the organizations interviewed did not offer public programs before nor during the pandemic, and one of the organizations closed down permanently.

### **2. The majority of arts organizations continued offering programming both online and in-person and they did so in a safe way that followed public health orders.**

While nearly all of the participating organizations had to cancel some programs, the majority continued offering some programs in some capacity either online (27 organizations), in person (23 organizations), or both online and in person (14 organizations). The three arts organizations that did not continue offering any programs were those that support live performance and did not have access to reliable internet or information systems needed to present work online.

Several arts organizations who presented programs online mentioned that they were excited to be able to include more people from outside their regional area in their programming including people from across Canada and some international participants (approx. 10

organizations). In addition, most of those organizations mentioned that at the start of the pandemic, their organization had to educate themselves quickly in order to get their programs online, particularly when figuring out how to engage young children in digital programs. Most organizations expressed that they achieved success in offering high quality online programs but that those virtual programs cannot adequately replace in person activities, and they looked forward to returning to live programming when possible. In particular, participants mentioned that online programs did not offer the same sense of interpersonal connection, release or focused engagement provided by in person programs

### **3. Arts organizations conveyed that emergency government funding provided during COVID-19 was crucial to their ability to survive the pandemic.**

More than half of the participating arts organizations mentioned that they received emergency government funding in the form of wage subsidies, resiliency funding or otherwise. Of those organizations, most expressed that the funding was a “lifeline” and was “key” to enabling their organization to keep staff employed despite their sudden decreases in earned revenues due to the pandemic.

Despite emergency funding, several arts organizations mentioned that they had to let go some of their staff, particularly those who worked directly with the public such as educators or ushers. A few organizations expressed that it would be difficult to rebuild their organizational capacity following the pandemic because released staff might have found work in other sectors or organizations may still not have sufficient funds to hire people back. Three of the arts organizations conveyed that their organizations grew during the pandemic as they were able to hire more staff and offer new programs.

**4. Remote communities that do not have access to stable internet connections could not easily pivot to presenting their programs online.**

While most of the organizations interviewed had access to stable internet connections (33 organizations), several organizations working in remote communities did not have access to stable internet service or information platforms. Arts organizations who did not have stable internet connections were unable to pivot their public programs online, but half of those continued offering socially distanced arts programs for people in their communities including outdoor programs or free art activities that individuals could take home.

**5. One quarter of the participating arts organizations are specifically mandated to support vulnerable communities in BC.**

One quarter of the arts organizations we interviewed are specifically mandated to support vulnerable communities in BC, such as isolated seniors, people experiencing homelessness or people with Parkinson's and their caregivers. It is unlikely that one quarter of all BC arts organizations are specifically mandated to support vulnerable communities, and so this study was involuntarily biased towards including socially engaged arts organizations. Most of these organizations are smaller and younger organizations, who tended to prioritize the building of respectful and supportive relationships with their communities. Those organizations tended to be led by highly trained, nimble and forward-thinking arts educators and managers. During the pandemic, these arts organizations offered community-based services included ongoing, arts-based, affordable or no-cost childcare for young children and at-risk youth (one of which included a busing system). Some arts organizations created art kits, or hosted guided walks, film

screenings or virtual choirs for families, isolated seniors or those living with Parkinson's and their caregivers. In response to COVID-19, one arts organization who already collaborated on creative projects with incarcerated people, decided to maintain their relationship with the inmates by organizing a creative letter writing project.

## **6. Organizations without this specific mandate still see the social value of their work.**

Whether specifically mandated to support a vulnerable community or not, throughout the pandemic, arts organizations took on risk and used their creativity, skill and energy to address a specific social need within their community and, more generally, support people's wellbeing. Through our conversations, again and again, we heard that communities viewed those services as being a lifeline during the pandemic. The interviews suggest that there is space for both new and established arts organizations to offer socially engaged arts programs.

Most organizations not mandated to support a vulnerable community nonetheless recognize the social value of their work. These organizations expressed a belief that their work supported health and wellbeing of their public by decreasing social isolation and anxiety, and increasing participants' self-confidence, self-expression, critical thinking, memory and other factors. For example, one arts organization that is not mandated to support a vulnerable community nonetheless enabled the creation of a live performance presented by people experiencing homelessness in Vancouver. After the discovery of the unmarked mass-grave of 215 Indigenous children at a former residential school in Kamloops, another arts organization found itself as a gathering place for local residents who came to grieve, express themselves and problem solve. As communities grapple with rising social and environmental concerns, it is possible that arts organizations will continue meeting additional community needs.

Some of the organizations that are not specifically mandated to support a vulnerable population (but do so anyway) are large, well-established organizations that agreed to build specific programs for vulnerable communities. In many cases, such programs were usually developed by a champion within the large organization who worked to enable the special program to continue, even if it wasn't one of the main priorities of that organization.

Two of these organizations also recognized that members of the public saw their organization as being elitist or exclusionary institutions. Interestingly, it was the perceived exclusivity of these institutions that motivated vulnerable communities to take part in programs specifically tailored for them. These institutions have reputations for artistic excellence, and people from various backgrounds felt proud to create art alongside them. These organizations also recognized that funders and community partners were especially receptive to developing new and specifically tailored programs for vulnerable communities because of the established arts organizations' good reputations.

There were two organizations who did not feel that speaking about the wellbeing of their public is a priority. One of the arts organizations preferred to focus on the artistic merit of their work, and the other, an Indigenous-led organization, expressed that the organization had to prioritize the wellbeing of their employees, most of whom are Indigenous. The Indigenous-led organization indicated that, amongst other concerns, members of the public exhibited racist behaviours towards their employees, which was of concern to the organization both before and during the pandemic. The organization had successfully applied for a grant from outside the arts sector to support their employees' health and wellbeing.

**7. Almost all of the participating arts organizations did not have the capacity to do formal research to evaluate their impact on communities.**



The majority of the participating arts organizations did not have the capacity to do formal research including research that would measure the impact of their work. Those organizations that did undertake formal or informal research, 10 organizations, did so in collaboration with a university or college-based partner or had a staff member with a PhD. Despite these limitations, many expressed their interest in being better able to measure the social impact of their work and are open to collaborating with other organizations in order to facilitate research processes. Arts organizations are interested in measuring the impact of their work because they believe that such research would enable them to solicit more funding, or develop partnerships and other forms of community support.

#### **8. Arts organizations mandated to support vulnerable communities faced greater instability.**

As mentioned earlier in this report, this study is biased towards organizations that felt stable enough to give their time to support a research initiative. In other words, this interview process tended to unintentionally exclude arts organizations that did not have enough staff or capacity during the pandemic to accept and participate in an interview. With this in mind, half of the participating organizations felt that their organization had enough funding in order to feel stable. However, while the participating organizations were relatively stable, half nonetheless felt a lack of financial stability. Moreover, of the arts organizations specifically mandated to support vulnerable communities, half lacked financial stability.

During the interviews, organizations mandated to support vulnerable communities also discussed ways in which they might feel greater financial stability and become more successful in their work. Overall, they felt that in building respectful programs to support vulnerable communities, it is important to build community trust and to maintain that trust over the long run. Given that most socially engaged arts programs were funded on a project-to-project basis, it is particularly challenging to develop longstanding, respectful relationships within communities. For example, one arts organization ran a music program for a hospice, supporting the end-of-life care offered by the hospice. While the hospice and its clients responded positively to the program, it was challenging for the arts organization to secure new funding while also offering the program. As a result, the program ended after its one-year grant funding was exhausted.

Overall, arts organizations that support community wellbeing and social development hoped to access multi-year funding, in order to offer consistent, reliable and respectful community programs. One way to achieve this goal is to reframe dominant concepts of artistic excellence. While artistic merit is often attributed to exceptional arts objects or products, there is also great social value in the work of arts professionals who can lead communities in creative processes. In other words, a more democratic funding model might value artistic processes over artistic products.

Arts organizations also conveyed that using the arts to support community wellbeing is greatly “underutilized” and “undervalued”, and that many more people could benefit from this type of work if it were more systematically supported and widely disseminated. Organizations needed support with funding, but also with accessing space within which to offer their programs. For example, one arts organization, which offers an arts-based afterschool care program at little cost to families, mentioned that they don’t have regular access to a space within which to offer

their program. When their access to a space was interrupted, so was their ability to offer a consistent program that working families could rely upon.

In addition, a handful of arts organizations mentioned that while they used to undertake socially engaged programs, providing such programs was not financially sustainable even when their programs were being offered to private sector companies. Instead, the arts organizations found it brought them more financial security to focus on making artistic products.

**9. More than half of the participating arts organizations felt that their future is bright and depends upon offering equitable programs that meet the needs of their communities.**

Although participating arts organizations could not know all the potential impacts of the pandemic, more than half of the participating arts organizations feel that their future is bright. Arts organizations are excited to continue building their programs, finding new ways to connect with communities and provide equitable, safe and thoughtful programs.

Despite a general feeling of positivity, three concerns about the future were repeated. First, arts organizations were concerned that private and public sector funding for the arts, as well as the number of people buying tickets, might decrease as a consequence of the pandemic. Small organizations in particular mentioned that they spend almost half their time engaged in grant writing and feel that the grant writing system needs to become more efficient. Second, a few organizations feared the impact of corporations and industry on their ability to do their work for their communities. For example, in one community, the mining industry had purchased all of the local hotels, which meant that visitors had nowhere to stay when attending the local festival. This meant it was likely the festival would be cancelled. Third, a few arts organizations expressed a grave concern regarding wildfires and whether their communities and organizations would

survive the fires. A couple of those organizations also mentioned that their communities were traumatized by the wildfires, and that they had developed arts programs to help their communities cope.

## Part 4: Discussion and Summary

Taken together, our survey and the interviews provide insight into the ways in which BC residents turned to creative activities during the pandemic and how arts organizations in the province stepped up to support BC residents during this time. As we have seen, BC residents spent almost twice as much time per week engaged in creative activities during the pandemic for the purpose of supporting their mental health and wellbeing. Moreover, 55% of BC residents who identify as female said they highly valued creative activities during the pandemic, and arts organizations across BC have the skills to provide high-quality socially engaged arts programming.

It's not entirely surprising that arts organizations provided forms of care to BC communities during the pandemic, or that BC residents turned to creativity to support their wellbeing. There is extensive research that demonstrates how the arts can support health and wellbeing. A 2019 study endorsed by the World Health Organization references hundreds of other studies that show the positive impacts of creative expression on health and wellbeing (Fancourt 2019). In addition, worldwide, there are well-established programs that demonstrate how arts-based interventions can be an efficient approach to altering the social factors that influence people's health and wellbeing, sometimes called the *social determinants of health* (APPG 2017). This study aligns with the belief that the work of caregivers, which can be framed as including the work of community-based artists and arts educators who support public health

and wellbeing, is crucial and that their work should be appropriately compensated, systematically supported and equitably accessed.

In considering how this might be achieved in BC at this point in time, it is also important to acknowledge some of the recent research that demonstrates the destructive impact that COVID-19 has had on professional artists and arts organizations. For example, the Canadian Association for the Performing Arts' research shows that in 2020, one in four Canadian artists lost their jobs, and the total number of hours worked in the sector in Canada declined by 36.6% (CAPACOA 2021). Similarly, Orchestras Canada's National Arts and Culture Impact Survey of Individuals show that the Federal Government's emergency response benefits were critical to enabling creatives to continue their work. However, despite the importance of government supports, 43% Canadian artists expect to have an income of less than \$20,000 during the pandemic, compared to 15% before the pandemic. Together these numbers suggests that the professional arts, entertainment and recreation sector was disproportionately affected by COVID-19 and was the hardest hit sector in Canada regarding employment (CAPACOA 2021).

Moreover, Orchestras Canada's research on organizations studies the impact of COVID-19 on arts institutions. In 2021, Orchestras Canada showed that about 3% of arts organizations had already, or were about to, close their doors. As the study warns, this relatively low percentage of reported closures should be taken with a grain of salt, given it is unlikely that organizations that were highly stressed or had already closed were able to participate in the study (Orchestras Canada 2021). This means it's possible that many more arts and culture organizations in BC will actually close their doors during or beyond the pandemic. Existing research makes it clear that the pandemic has greatly impacted the arts sector across Canada.

In addition, existing research also highlights which factors might contribute to the arts sector's renewal as the COVID-19 pandemic eases, including what combination of masks, ventilation, distancing and sanitizer would make audiences comfortable returning to live performances, and whether members of the public are willing to pay for digitized cultural experiences (Orchestras Canada).

When imagining the renewal of BC's cultural sector after the pandemic, one key impetus for reforming cultural practices in BC is to respond to the calls to action and justice outlined in the final reports of Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, as well as the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women and Children. These inquiry reports suggest that enabling Indigenous control over Indigenous culture is key to combating the impacts of cultural genocide in Canada, and it is particularly settler-led cultural organizations that must make further changes to the way they work in support of Indigenous sovereignty. These recommendations come alongside ongoing calls from IBPOC/BIPOC and disability artists and organizations in BC for greater equity within the sector. Given these multiple calls for increasing equity and justice within the arts and cultural space, the sector should invite more radical transformation as it is reimagined and rebuilt following the pandemic.

In imagining the future of the cultural sector, we might also consider how the general population has relied on creative activities during the pandemic. We might also be mindful of the 37% of Canadian arts organizations that courageously offered their communities in-person arts programs throughout the pandemic (Orchestras Canada 2021). These organizations were able to find safe and creative ways to continue offering in-person arts services because those services were considered vital to their communities. Coming out of the pandemic, we might also consider how funders, governments, universities and other stakeholders can work together to better

support arts-workers and to help make arts-based wellness programs more mainstream. Doing so may help facilitate the efforts of caregivers in BC communities and enable broader access to creative activities that support residents' health and wellbeing. Some recommendations are listed below.

## Part 5: Recommendations

**HEALTH:** Develop an intergovernmental strategy to support the delivery of arts-based health programs that address the social determinants of health. For example, creating an arts-on-prescription pilot program in BC, similar to pilot programs in Ontario and Quebec.

**INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY:** Support arts organizations across BC to have access to reliable internet and high-quality information systems.

**RESEARCH:** Support partnerships between academic institutions and arts organizations, and fund and disseminate research on the social and health impacts of arts organizations on their communities.

**A STRONG FOUNDATION FOR OUR CREATIVE SECTOR:** Ensure that arts workers who are supporting community health by delivering arts programs are appropriately compensated and have access to multi-year grant funding beyond year-by-year project funds.

**REDEFINING THE ARTS IN GRANTS:** Encourage arts funders and cultural planners to value the arts beyond its aesthetic excellence, and for art's civic impacts related to social justice, environmental sustainability, quality of life, and other factors.

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## Appendix 1 - Survey Summary

	2019 Pre-Pandemic	2020 during Pandemic
Top two reasons why the general population participated in creative activities	To “Have Fun” (36%) and to “Experience New Things” (21%).	To “Have Fun” (26.7%) and to “Improve my Mental Health” (23.8%).
Selecting <b>mental health</b> as the most important reason to participate in creative activities is impacted by identity and income level	<b>General population: 12%</b>	<b>General population: 23.8%</b>
	<b>Identify with disability: 23%</b>	<b>Identify with disability: 25.7%</b>
	<b>Below median income: 15%</b>	<b>Below median income: 27.6%</b>
The median <b>number of hours</b> spent engaged in creative activities each week is related to income level	<b>General population: 5</b>	<b>General population: 8</b>
	<b>Below median income: 6</b>	<b>Below median income: 10</b>
Viewing creative activities as being important to their lives is impacted by identity and income level	<b>Identify as male: 27.5%</b>	<b>Identify as male: 35%</b>
	<b>Identify as female: 47%</b>	<b>Identify as female: 54.5%</b>
	<b>Below median income: 38.9%</b>	<b>Below median income: 47.1%</b>
In 2020, identity characteristics was linked with people’s self-perception as being creative	X	<b>Identify as male: 18.2%</b>
		<b>Identify as female: 24.5%</b>
		<b>Identify with disability: 30%</b>
		<b>Below median income: 25.9%</b>
In 2020, BC residents thought they would engage more in creative activities if they had:	X	<b>More money: 26.7%</b>
		<b>More time: 18%</b>
		<b>Greater access: 18.3%</b>
		<b>Felt a greater connection to activities on offer: 25.6%</b>