

**exploration:**

**a creative economic development office  
for the vancouver island/rural islands  
ecosystem**

# opportunities

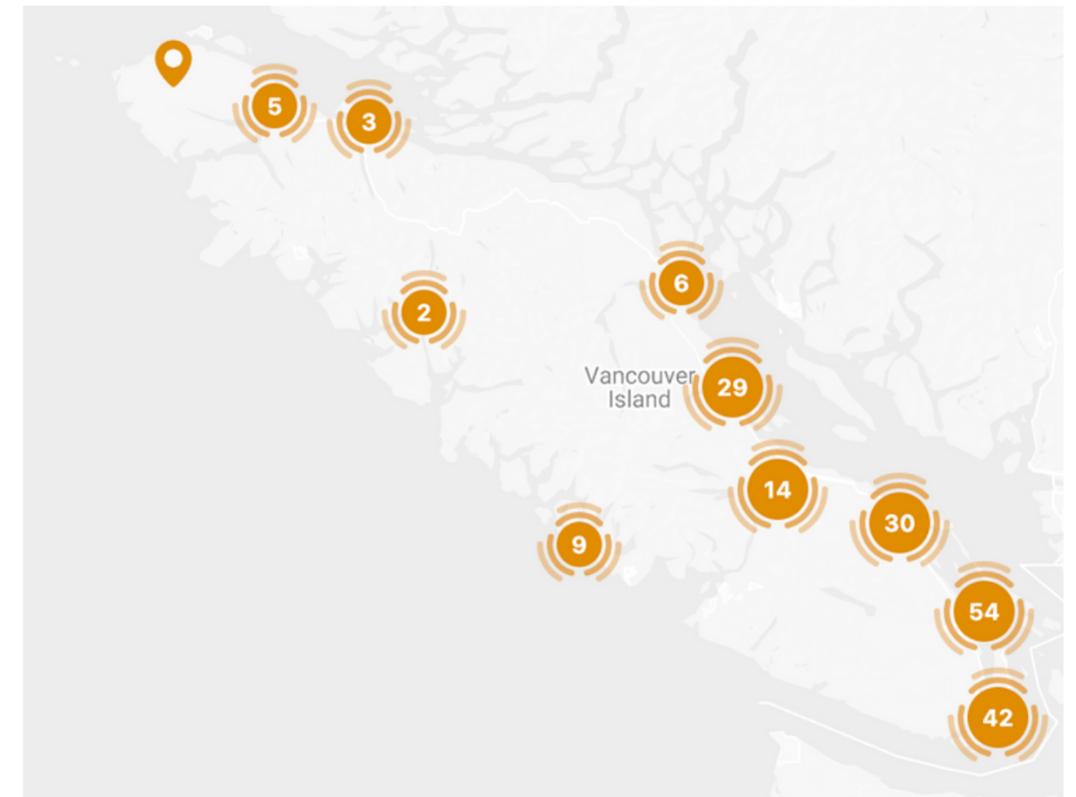
creative  
coast

## **creative entrepreneurs are a huge untapped potential**

- Vancouver Island is a major global tourist destination, with considerable and unrealized strengths in arts/cultural and Indigenous tourism
- The Vancouver Island/rural Islands super-region is home to a higher-than-average density of creatives [5% of the population, which is 5x higher than previously thought]. At least 35,000 people are engaged professionally or casually in creative entrepreneurial pursuits
- The arts sector contributes significantly to our super-regional economy, including:
  - >> \$900 million in total direct economic output of arts and culture activity
  - >> \$675 million in GDP contributions, including indirect and induced impacts
  - >> 22,000 FTEs and more than \$525 million in labour income
- The social benefits of a thriving arts sector include: creating kinder, more resilient communities; shaping cultural identity and defining a sense of place; increasing cultural safety; and reducing stress in participants

## creative entrepreneurs are being left behind

- The full potential of the arts sector cannot be realized without supports and services similar to those available to sectors such as tourism and small business
- No structure currently exists to provide creative entrepreneurs with essential business incubation and growth supports/services. Current efforts benefit a small segment of the creative sector [low hanging fruit].
- Big portions of the super-region have access to almost no supports.
- Arts councils are neither mandated nor equipped to fulfil this role. Further, the arts council 'system' excludes significant populations including IBPOC, rural and remote communities



Creative Coast asset mapping exercise

# proposed solution

## integration requires targeted supports and services

We want to pilot Canada's first Creative Economic Development Office. Our super-region is the perfect size/scope for program and scalability testing. This pilot would sync with current efforts locally and across Canada to measure the creative impact of the arts sector

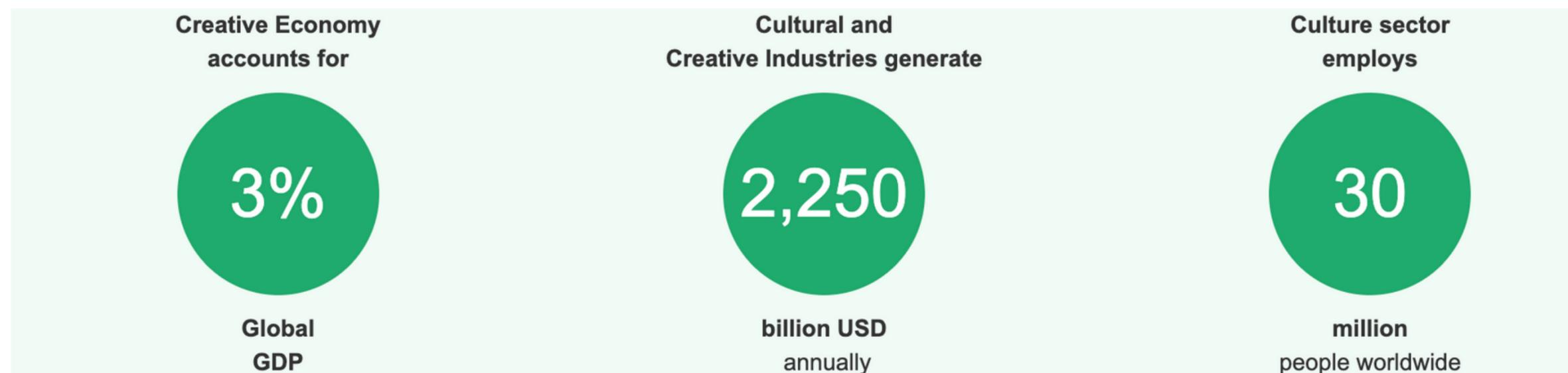
### Now is the time:

- Our efforts over the past 3 years align with key recommendations of the UN's special report on creative economy opportunities - including mapping local assets and collecting data/building datasets
- The United Nations (UNESCO) declared 2021 the International Year of Creative Economy for Sustainable Development
- We have proven local templates for how to deliver CEDO services (e.g. VICTRP, RIEP's Rising Tide Services), and our own explorations into digital/tech and marketing supports
- To date we have received almost \$850k from Canada Council for the Arts (\$815k) and BC Arts Council (\$30k). These monies have spent/committed for digital literacy and access, data collection, capacity and sector/cross-sector building activities.
- Economic development isn't a direct fit with the above arts orgs. Other potential funders include Heritage Canada, Pacifican.
- Delivery model could be distributed, with partners such as 4VI, Community Futures/NEDC, RIEP, VIEA

# global context

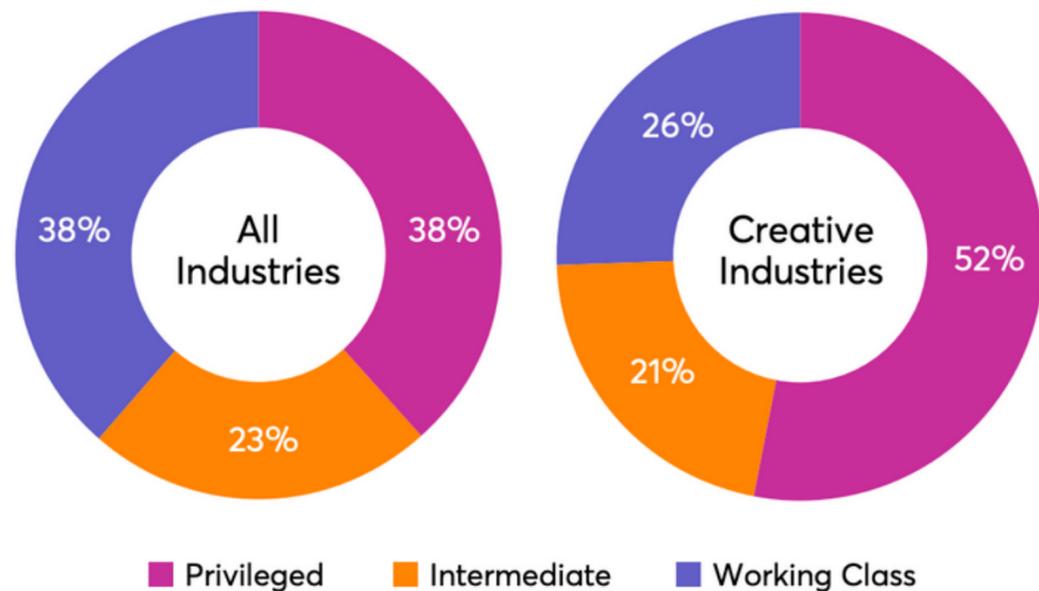
**the sector is evolving at pace and the pandemic only expedited this**

“The creative economy is one of the world’s most rapidly growing sectors, contributing 3% of the global GDP. Creativity is also a renewable, sustainable, limitless resource that we can find anywhere around the world. As we face climate crisis and the pandemic, its potential to drive a human-centric, inclusive development has never been more relevant. Creativity is the industry of tomorrow. ”



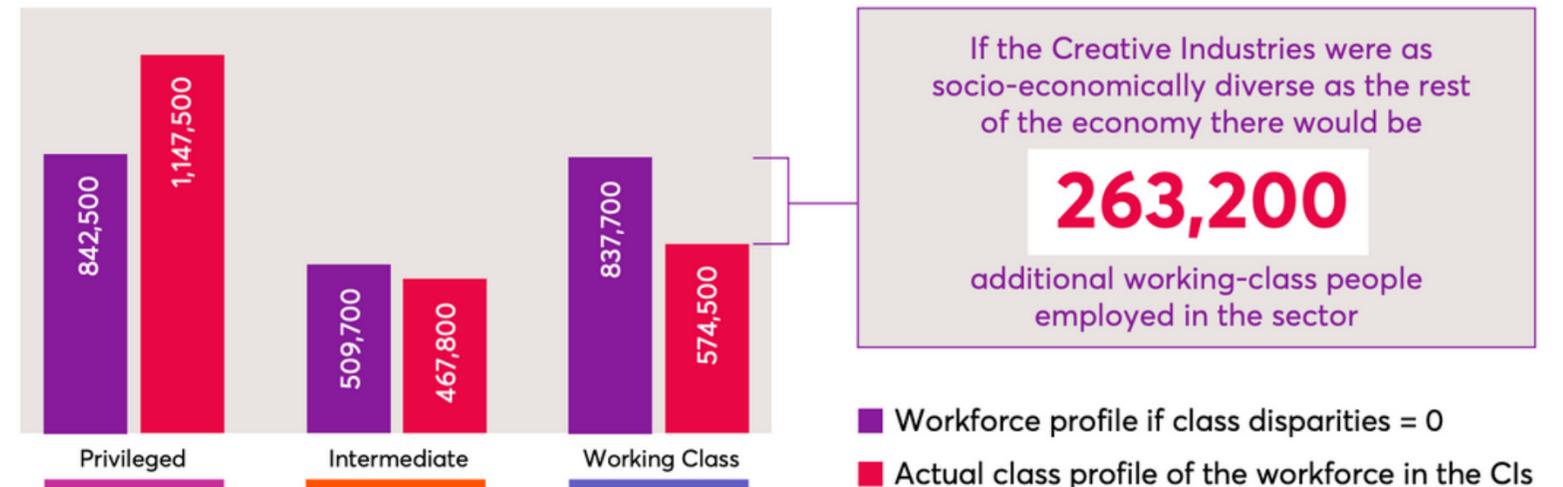
# global context

we're leaving a lot of creatives behind



Those from a privileged background are **twice** as likely to be employed in the creative industries than those from working-class backgrounds

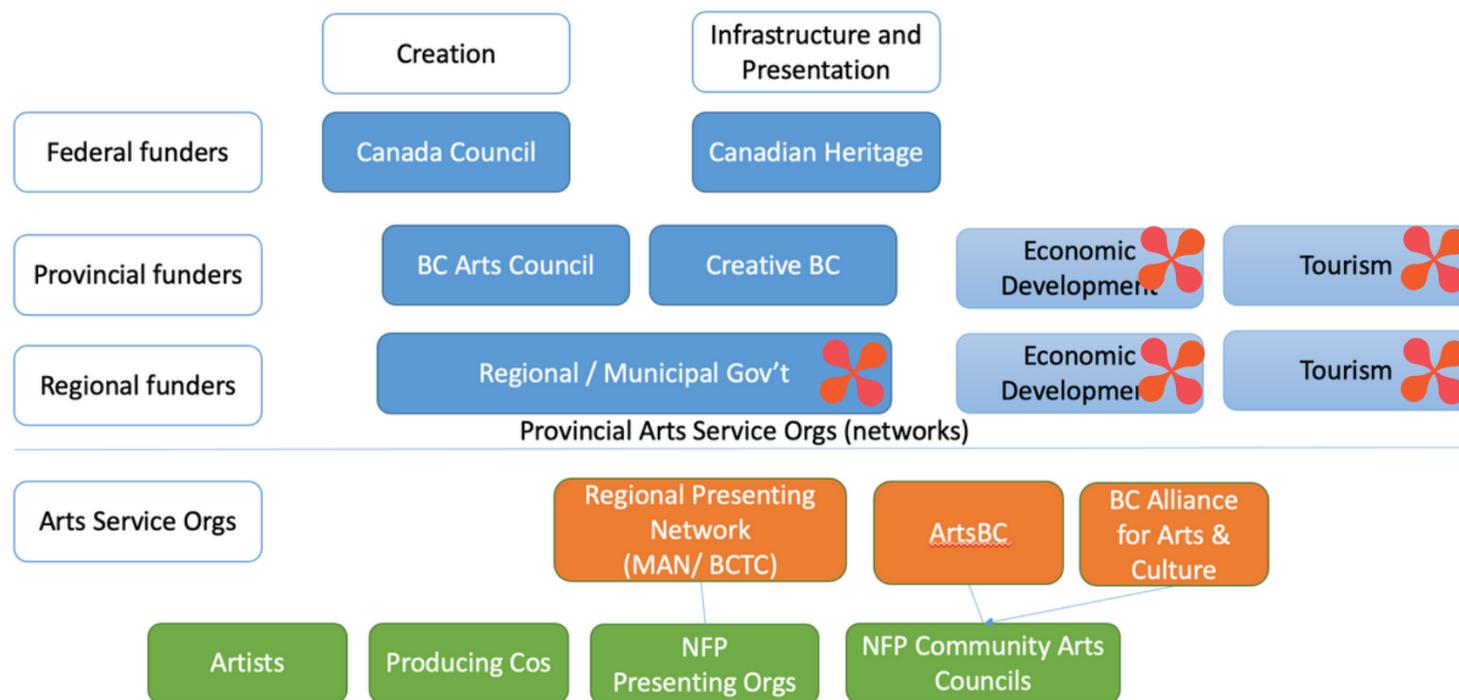
Employment in the Creative Industries, 2020



Excerpt from: Five reasons why we need to sharpen focus on socio-economic diversity, chapter 2 in the September 2021 report [Social mobility in the Creative Economy Rebuilding and levelling up?](#) from the UK Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre

# national + local context

## nobody's doing 'ground up' creative economic development



Arts sector funding model. Source: Inga Petri, Strategic Moves

## Observations after 3 years of research/engagements:

- Canada's cultural policy environment is solid, but it doesn't seem to be translating to sufficient 'ground up' business incubation, especially for rural/remote areas and underserved populations.
- No cross-sectoral initiative coordination; siloes are strong! No known investments from these  orgs in creative entrepreneurship
- No integrated cultural plans, tourism plans and economic development plans

# local impact

october 2021 - inaugural 'all islands' arts impact study

[creativecoast.ca/impact](https://creativecoast.ca/impact)

## Economic Impact

Through more than **\$900 million** in direct economic activity, the arts contributes **\$675 million in GDP** and supports more than **20,000 jobs (FTEs)**.

	Organizations	Artists	Tourism	Total
<b>Direct Output (\$M)</b>	174	401	335	<b>910</b>
<b>Total GDP (\$M)</b>	162	322	192	<b>676</b>
<b>Total Employment (FTEs)</b>	3,260	15,630	3,030	<b>21,920</b>
<b>Total Labour Income (\$M)</b>	139	249	138	<b>526</b>

## local impact

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### Total Direct Outputs Compared to Other Industries



\$900 Million  
**Islands/  
Coast Arts  
and Culture**



\$624 Million  
**Vancouver  
Island  
University**



\$124 Million  
**Victoria  
Cruise Ship  
Economy**



\$32 Million  
**Regional  
Dairy  
Industry**

The arts also support ~35% more jobs than the region's forestry sector.

# local impact

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## Artist Profile

- More than **35k artists** estimated in the region, with nearly **three quarters practicing visual arts**
- More than **20k artists that are revenue generating:**
  - Average income: ~\$18k
  - Average expenses ~\$14k

	Estimated # of Artists	Artist Population Breakdown	Regional Concentration Ratio
Revenue Generating Artists	22,700	61%	3%
Non-revenue generating	14,500	39%	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>37,200</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5%</b>

# local impact

"The arts is a human asset that's available in our communities and entirely underexploited.

The beauty of the arts is that it is highly sustainable. It doesn't have a huge impact on the environment. And it is something which can be integrated into a lot of other efforts: revitalization, business, public amenities.

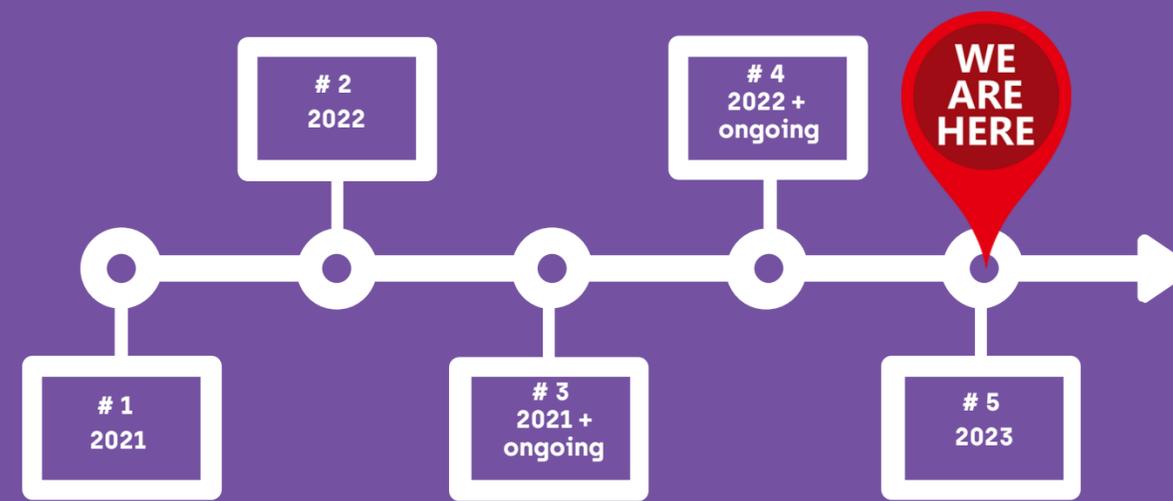
There is so much potential here, and the true potential is in the human assets which are just lying there dormant in communities: undervalued and underutilized."

Excerpt from October 2021 Interview with Line Robert about All-Islands Arts Impact Study

# impact measurement

We've all just started to understand and measure creative impact:

- October 2021 - COMPLETED - Vancouver Island/Rural Islands Arts Impact Study. First effort to measure economic and social impact of a super-region's arts sector (locally and in BC). Findings considered to be statistically accurate and also conservative - many populations and subsectors weren't counted
- January 2023 - APPROVED - NFRF Grant: \$500k, 2 year "to leverage data visualization as a co-creative data empowerment process with and for communities to better support community members in collecting, understanding and communicating data for the purpose of evidence-based economic policy development." Focus on underserved/underrepresented communities. Creative Coast is a partner on this grant with a team of SFU faculty, led by Sheelagh Carpendale, Canada Research Chair in Information Visualization
- February 2023 - PROPOSED - SSHRC Partnership Grant: Creating a Community-Driven National Framework for Creative Impact. Cross-Canada initiative. Creative Coast is a partner on a 7-year SSHRC grant submission, led by Mass Culture and Toronto Metropolitan University



roadmap

1. Recognize that the creative economy generates economic as well as non-monetary value that contributes significantly to achieving inclusive and sustainable societal development (including UNDRIP). **REINFORCED BY ARTS IMPACT STUDY**
2. Reveal opportunities through mapping local assets and analyzing the critical success factors that contribute to existing and new pathways for local creative economy development. Success factors include: the availability of infrastructure and labour resources, the existence of legislation protecting intellectual property, artists rights, access to global markets, etc. **SOME EFFORTS UNDERWAY, WOULD BENEFIT FROM CROSS-SECTORAL ASSET/CAPABILITIES MAPPING**
3. Strengthen the evidence base through rigorous data collection as a fundamental upstream investment to any coherent creative economy development policy in the region. **UNDERWAY LOCALLY AND NATIONALLY [SEE FINAL SLIDE]**
4. Make culture a driver and enabler of economic, social and environmental development processes, since positive changes can take place only in a culturally defined society. Engage in cross-sectoral cooperation to facilitate productive mutual learning as well as the sharing of information and experiences. **THIS CONVERSATION HAS BEGUN AND CAN BE BROADENED**
5. Invest in sustainable creative enterprise development across the value chain. Provide support for local learning and innovation to foster new talents or new forms of creativity. Mainstream culture into local economic and social development programmes. **INVESTIGATE OPPORTUNITIES TO PILOT CREATIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**

# our call to action

- Let's be the first area in Canada to systematically build out the 'creative economy ecosystem' described in UNESCO's 'Year of Creative Economy' call to action. Let's showcase what full inclusion and integration with tourism and economic development looks and feels like.
- We know we can leverage the potential of our creative economy. We have many advantages here, including a manageable geographic/population size/scale, and partners who are receptive to the kind of deep collaboration this experiment will require.
- BUT we need mentorship and funding to develop and test this creative economic development model.

# next steps

- Identify components that go into structuring a 'typical' EDO proposal, and customize to meet the needs of creative entrepreneurs - particularly in rural/remote and underserved areas
- Determine comparable and unique metrics [#s engaged, #s trained - by subregion and demographic; #s business viability audits; %revenue sales growth] and milestones [budgets, website development, marketing plans]
- Identify funding and collaboration partners
- Prepare CREDO project plan and proposal
- Others?

We all share the responsibility to help restore prosperity by advancing economic reconciliation.

**"art is the softest place  
for the hardest conversations."**

Illana Hester

**"human creativity is the  
ultimate economic resource."**

Richard Florida