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Making a Single Case for the Arts: An International Perspective

A research report written by
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Introduction

One is forced to admit that in Canada, the cultural sector is fragmented and that it has been impossible so far to articulate a single cultural policy, a fact which was deplored as recently as late June 2008 by the Governor General of Canada Michaëlle Jean and her husband Jean-Daniel Lafond.¹

Historically, the Canadian Conference for the Arts was the single, overarching organization representing the interests of all artistic disciplines in all regions. Nowadays, professional, discipline-specific organizations have developed to represent their own interests. Nevertheless, it remains the CCA's mandate to "act as the national forum for the artistic and cultural community in Canada" and articulate policies ensuring the growth of the cultural sector.²

This double mandate of "Think Tank" and advocate for the cultural sector raises a number of questions, particularly in a political context where lobbying is viewed with suspicion. While the American Constitution recognizes the right for citizens to lobby politicians, in Canada the activity is perceived rather negatively and is the object of ever stricter legislation and regulation. There is no legal distinction in Canada between *lobby* and *advocacy*. The *Federal Accountability Act*³ adopted in December 2006 by the 39th Parliament of Canada makes no difference between the two concepts, referring instead to "communication" with an elected official or a designated bureaucrat on a policy issue. None of the for legal dictionaries consulted even give a definition of either term⁴

Obtaining a consensus on issues to promote as part of a cultural policy necessitates resorting to the notions of advocacy and lobbying, especially in a context when federal support of the arts is jeopardized. Both involve artist associations and members of the civil society to approach the public sector to secure greater support for the arts.

This research report aims at investigating how other countries have addressed this issue and succeeded in developing a collaborative *modus*

¹ http://www.radio-canada.ca/arts-spectacles/PlusArts/2008/06/30/002-gouverneure_culture.asp

² http://www.ccart.ca/fr/about/mission/documents/cca_culturalpolicymandate_fr.pdf

³ <http://www2.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?pub=bill&doc=C-2&parl=39&ses=1&language=E>

⁴ We would see the difference between *advocacy* and *lobby* in what we would call the preponderance of interests. We use *advocacy* in the highest sense of the word, which seeks the advancement of the common good through the promotion of laws, regulations, policies and programs which contribute to the vitality of arts and culture and what is made available to Canadians. In this context, advocating means pleading *pro bono publico*, which is a recognized legal term. As for *lobbying*, we deem the word to describe an activity which pursues specific interests of a group or sector of society in a direct and measurable way.

operandi among arts organizations each articulating cultural policies in order to make a single case for the arts.

In the United States, the National Association of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) provides clear examples to distinguish between the two activities:

“Making general arguments about the importance of public support for the arts is **advocacy**. Asking a legislator to vote for an increase in public arts funding in an appropriations bill is **lobbying**.”⁵

We will look at the contexts which have produced successful arts advocacy efforts. Then we will look at foreign best practices in that respect. The main example will be Americans for the Arts, for it offers the most developed illustration of arts advocacy network building. Finally, from these examples, we will identify the elements of a successful arts advocacy.

I. Arts Advocacy: an Emerging Phenomenon

Advocating for the arts has developed along the lines of other older advocacy groups such as those campaigning for health, environmental issues, or consumer rights. Certain contexts are more favorable to this activity than others. There are some conjunctural factors where a punctual issue is identified and advocacy forces are mustered to address the issue. There are also some structural factors, such as the inscription of these advocacy and lobbying activities in the political process. We will then see how arts advocacy networks started being formed and finally how advocacy efforts are justified, namely through what arguments.

A. Context

Public funding for the arts and culture is being reorganized worldwide, as other pressing concerns such as health and education and are making an increasing demand on the taxpayer’s money. In this context, finding new kinds of support has become vital for the arts. To advocate for support for the arts, organizations have discovered that it would be in their interest to merge and form advocacy networks.

The United States is the most obvious case in point. Although data compiled by the National Association of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) shows that state art agencies’ appropriations have been rising since 2004 as well as local government expenditure on the arts since 2005 while the NEA appropriations have remained stable,⁶ NASAA Chief Program and Planning Officer Kelly

⁵ <http://www.nasaa-arts.org/publications/mar06nasaa-advocate.pdf>

⁶ Grantmakers in the Arts, the Foundation Center and the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, *Vital Signs. Snapshots of Arts Funding*, 2007, http://www.giarts.org/usr_doc

Barsdate points out that advocacy is a growing necessity to secure the survival of the arts sector:

“Public sector grant makers continue to underscore the need for advocacy from citizens, the cultural community and private sector leaders. All the voices are needed to help elected officials understand support of the arts as sound public policy that returns multiple benefits to our cities and towns, our states and our nation.”⁷

In this context, the six regional arts organizations⁸ of the United States increasingly diversified their activities and resource bases.⁹ At state level, some arts organizations coalesced in the 1990s to unify their efforts towards the arts. In 1996, Arizona created the Arizona Arts Endowment Fund, an overarching structure designed to advance the cause of its many partner organizations. In Oregon, a cultural planning taskforce was formed in 1999 by a special bill to develop an “over-arching cultural plan to make explicit the connections between culture, state identity, community development and economic development” which became known as the Oregon Cultural Trust in 1999 and has succeeded in “aligning the arts, humanities, preservation and other cultural constituencies around a common set of policy goals.” This generated profit through the tax incentive of this new nonprofit organization.¹⁰

This phenomenon also affects Europe whose political culture is traditionally more centralized. A report published by the European Parliament covering the period 2000-2005 identified that most countries are reorganizing their cultural administrations through processes of decentralization or withdrawal of the State. In the face of this trend, the report recommended that governments devise the right initiatives to stimulate the market and especially the third sphere (non-profit organizations) in supporting culture. It also recommended that people be made more aware that the arts are important and worth being supported.¹¹ Meanwhile, in the rest of the world, the mid-eighties ushered in political and social changes which led to the creation or the reorganization of many cultural bodies to advance cultural democracy.¹²

⁷ Grant-makers in the Arts and the Foundation Center, *Vital Signs. Snapshots of Arts Funding*, 2007, 12.

⁸ Arts Midwest, Mid-America Arts Alliance Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation, New England Foundation for the Arts, Southern Arts Federation and Western States Arts Federation.

⁹ National Association of State Arts Agencies, *Cultural Policy Innovation: A Review of the Arts at the State Level*, prepared for the Pew Charitable Trusts, June 2001.

¹⁰ National Association of State Arts Agencies, *Cultural Policy Innovation: A Review of the Arts at the State Level*, prepared for the Pew Charitable Trusts, June 2001.

¹¹ European Parliament, Policy Department, Structural and Cohesion Policies, Culture and Education, *Financing the Arts and Culture in the European Union*, Brussels: 2006.

¹² <http://www.ifacca.org/background/> The changes are listed by IFACCA as the “collapse of colonial and Communist state structures; the emergence of new democratic governments; desire of communities to be active participants in arts/cultural decision-making; need to reform government structures; desire to encourage private-sector contributions; increasing recognition of the value of civil society or ‘third-sector’ institutions.”

Some countries have the notion of advocacy more entrenched in their political systems than others. In the United States, this process happened as a natural outcome of a political culture acknowledging lobbying as playing an important part in decision-making. Lobbying is guaranteed by the First Amendment to the Constitution which adds to the first three freedoms the freedom “to petition the government for a redress of grievances.” Examples include the health care interest groups lobbying in the context of the health care reform bill of the early 1990s. Recently, interest groups have developed at state and local levels.¹³

In this context, arts advocacy networks have developed. One of the most prominent and successful ones is the International Federation of Actors (FIA). It describes itself as being independent, international, and representing the interests of trade unions and associations of performers around the world. The network was set up by the Syndicat National des Acteurs Français and the British Actors’ Equity in 1952 in the context of new difficulties faced by actors after the destruction of theaters during the war, and also of the lack of legislation concerning performers’ rights. The next meeting on the following year—also the first 1st Congress of the International Federation of Actors—was attended by delegates from 15 European countries and an observer from Australia. As FIA opened to members outside Europe, Latin American countries joined as well as Canada, Australia and Poland and membership has grown to include about 100 organizations throughout the world to this day. One of the first issues dealt with by FIA in the 1950s was the protection of national broadcasting as the various countries were differently equipped with transmitters and needed to consolidate their own industry. This led to an international collective bargaining and contributing to building what FIA boasts as an “immeasurable solidarity” among its members. FIA lobbies governments, international and European organizations and institutions. It also publishes a journal and gives practical advice to its members.

In Europe, Culture Action Europe has developed as an advocacy organization representing the interests of some 8000 artists and cultural organizations before policy-makers at the European level.¹⁴

In recent years, institutions closer to power also started developing arts advocacy activities. At the end of the 1990s, the various Arts Councils of English-speaking countries met informally with a view to creating an organized network, which happened in 2000 with the creation of the International Federation of Arts Councils and Cultural Agencies (IFACAA) during the meeting of Canada Council’s World Summit in Ottawa. The new association was open to all arts organizations throughout the world who fund or advocate for the arts. The networking process was overseen by Sarah Gardner, Director of Strategy and

¹³ Ronald J. Hrebenar, *Interest Group Politics in America*, M. E. Sharpe, (1982), 1997.

¹⁴ <http://www.cultureactioneurope.org/network/about-us>

Policy for the Australia Council and arts advocate who was to become founding CEO of the IFACCA.

As a result of this consultation, the model which was adopted for the IFACCA was that it would not primarily advocate for the arts, but provide resources to help arts councils and state agencies exchange best practices and tips to advocate for the arts. Accordingly, the IFACCA holds world summits and mini-summits. The world summits are held every three years. The second world summit held in 2003 included a workshop on “Making the Case for the Arts.” This workshop further contributed to the definition of art advocacy and identified successful strategies and also pitfalls to be avoided. Meanwhile, IFACAA also produces research reports, one of which gives advice and a bibliography on arts advocacy.¹⁵ Support for arts advocacy on an international level coincides with the development of research to back advocacy efforts.

B. Making the case for the arts

Arts impact research is a prerequisite in rallying arts organizations to articulate a single, unified message before potential funders. While the arguments in favor of arts support had already received scholarly attention,¹⁶ arts advocacy organizations soon began to undertake their own impact studies tailored to their needs, and to reflect upon how to use such studies to make the case for the arts most effectively. Prior to the worldwide shifting patterns of state support in the 1990s and the American culture wars, the intrinsic value of the arts was the prevailing argument to obtain increased funding of the arts. Since then however, it has been vital for the arts sector that arts advocates emphasize the instrumental benefits of the arts.¹⁷ In this section, we will see how the arguments used by arts advocacy organizations have evolved and are currently going beyond this dichotomy.

In 2001, with the coming to power of New Labour, the Arts Council of England (ACE) started a series of publications on the impact of the arts starting with social impact.¹⁸ This study was complemented a few months later by a review of the literature on economic and social impact of the arts was carried out

¹⁵ IFACCA, *D'Arts Topics*, #16, September 2003, <http://media.ifacca.org/files/advocacyarguments.pdf>

¹⁶ Joshua Guetzkow, (2002) “How the Arts Impact Communities: An Introduction to the literature on arts impact studies”, Princeton University Center for Arts and Cultural Policy Studies, Working Paper Series, 20, provides an excellent introduction to literature on arts impact. <http://www.princeton.edu/%7Eartspol/workpap/WP20%20-%20Guetzkow.pdf>

¹⁷ Kevin McCarthy, Elizabeth H. Ondaatje, *et al.*, 2004, *Reframing the Debate about the Benefits of the Arts*, a study commissioned by the Wallace Foundation and carried out by the Rand Corporation, http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/2005/RAND_MG218.pdf

¹⁸ Helen Jermyn, 2001, *The Arts and Social Exclusion: a review prepared for the Arts Council of England*.

by the ACE.¹⁹ It underlined the methodological flaws of existing research and identified tools to improve future research. In 2003, ACE published a report on art and neighborhood renewal. This was in the context of the *Modernizing Government* call for “evidence-based policy-making.”²⁰

Americans for the Arts (AFTA) produced a series of studies called *The Arts and Economic Prosperity*, the first one in 1994, the second one in 2002, and the third in 2005, which was the largest ever. In the United Kingdom ACE conducted two economic impact studies in 2004.²¹ Economic impact studies have remained a preferred arts advocacy argument in the United States, as evidenced by AFTA’s continuing work on the topic and its commitment to helping arts organizations and agencies to conduct their own economic impact studies.²²

Other studies have focused on the employment generated by artistic activity, for example *Artists in the Workforce 1990-2005*, published in 2008 by the National Endowment for the Arts. Meanwhile, Eurostat released for the first time in 2007 comparable statistics about cultural employment and the cultural economy in the European Union.²³ In the years 2005-2007, more studies were carried out in the United Kingdom on art and social impact, or art and urban regeneration.²⁴ In Australia, a report was published on art and community regeneration.²⁵

Another instrumental argument for the arts is academic performance. Studies were commissioned which proved that children who practiced or were exposed to art obtained higher results at school. In the context of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, in effect cutting down on arts provision in schools when academic performance in the core subjects fails, arts advocacy in the United States has taken a new direction, focusing increasingly on the benefits of artistic education. Some associations advocate for it full time such as the National Art Education Association. This is one of the strong messages articulated during AFTA’s main advocacy event, Arts Advocacy Day. Apart from this event, AFTA has organized campaigns on this issue: “the less art kids get, the more it shows.” On its advocacy page, people can support this cause in particular. Likewise, the National Endowment for the Arts has an Arts Education Network which published the results of a survey in 2006. Further supporting this advocacy argument is a study commissioned by the Dana Foundation to a team of leading neuroscientists on *Learning, Art and the Brain* between 2005 and 2008, the results of which were presented under the title of to the National Endowment for

¹⁹ Michelle Reeves, *Measuring the economic and social impact of the arts: a review*, London: Arts Council England, 2002.

²⁰ http://www.artsummit.org/summit2003/files/Ann_Bridgwood_paper.pdf

²¹ Arts Council England, *The Economic Impact of Theatre*, 2004; *The Impact of the Arts*, 2004;

²² http://www.artsusa.org/information_services/research/services/004.asp

²³ Eurostat, *Cultural Statistics*, 2007.

²⁴ Arts Council England, *Arts and Regeneration*, 2005 and 2007; *Doing the Arts Justice*, 2005; *Social impact study of the UK Theatre*, 2006.

²⁵ Australia Council, *Art and Wellbeing*, 2004.

the Arts in March 2008. The NASAA produced a research report on the topic in 2006.²⁶ Meanwhile, the Australia Council for the Arts published a report on *Education and the Arts* in 2005 and in the United Kingdom, research reports were published on arts and mental health in 2005 and 2007.²⁷

Some cultural policy analysts have complained that instrumental arguments have taken over the intrinsic value of the arts in the advocacy debate.²⁸ In 2001, Christopher Madden, a New-Zealand economist and cultural policy analyst working with the IFACCA, warned against the use of economic impact studies in arts advocacy, as he proved them to be based on distorted economic methodologies formulated by non-economists.²⁹ In 2004, one of the Rand Corporation studies on how to make the arts sector more effective made this point precisely.³⁰ The author of that study argues against the abuse of these arguments construed on the basis of often flawed methodologies once again, and reinstates the intrinsic value which can only be appreciated by means of a solid artistic education. At the same time, the British think-tank Demos together with other organizations held a conference in 2003 called 'Valuing Culture' to address the concern over instrumental arguments for the arts. Demos subsequently published several studies showing the need to build a broader basis for public support for the arts in order to restore the legitimacy of culture. This could help go beyond the instrumental arguments politicians have only listened to so far but which have not been sufficiently convincing. This is more effective than intrinsic value which is very difficult to define. It is up to cultural professionals to redress the situation, hence the growing importance of arts advocacy. Such is the way for arts advocacy to go according to the author.³¹

In the light of this research, it seems that arts advocacy would be most effective by drawing on a combination of intrinsic and instrumental values and tailoring its message to its audiences. Such are the recommendations made by a report carried out by the Pew Charitable Trusts in 2003 called *Policy Partners*.

²⁶ National Association of State Arts Agencies in collaboration with Arts Education Partnership, *Critical Evidence: How the Arts Benefit Student Achievement*, 2006. <http://www.nasaa-arts.org/publications/critical-evidence.pdf>

²⁷ Arts Council England, *Your Health and the Arts*, 2005, and *Art, Health and Well-Being*, 2007.

²⁸ Ellen Winner, Lois Hetland, "The Arts and Academic Achievement: What the Evidence Shows", *The Journal of Aesthetic Education*, Vol 34, #3/4, Fall/Winter 2000, argues that making the arts instrumental to academic success implies condoning the conditional provision of arts education in schools; it also makes and documents the distinction between areas where causal links between arts education and academic success can be found, and areas where there are no causal effects. See too M. Volkerling, 1994, "Death or Transfiguration: the Future of Cultural Policy in New Zealand", *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, Vol. 7(1); 7-28.

²⁹ Christopher Madden, "Using 'Economic' Impact Studies in Arts and Cultural Advocacy: A Cautionary Note", *Media International Australia*, #98, February 2001. <http://www.fuel4arts.com/content/files/ACF5A4E.pdf>

³⁰ Kevin McCarthy, Elizabeth H. Ondaatje, *et al.*, 2004, *Reframing the Debate about the Benefits of the Arts*, a study commissioned by the Wallace Foundation and carried out by the Rand Corporation, http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/2005/RAND_MG218.pdf

³¹ John Holden, *Cultural Value and the Crisis of Legitimacy*, London: Demos, 2006.

*Making the Case for State Investments in Culture*³² and whose goal was “to identify mechanisms, ideas, and practices that could advance state-level cultural policy, especially those policies that augment public resources for culture.” This report looked at policies in a variety of cultural fields across the United States—arts, folk life, historic preservation, and humanities. The main findings of this research are the need to develop common resources; to build alliances in the various cultural fields “to have clout in the policy arena” ; to devise a unifying set of themes “that communicate value to many different stakeholders”; “to combine core values and instrumental values”; to clarify the incentives, business models and the general *modus operandi* of these greater cultural alliances; to build strategic partnerships between the public and the private sector and maintaining the personal relationships with the decision-makers. Such was also the cautionary tone of the 2003 IFACCA World Summit which rejected abstract, one-size-fits-all arts advocacy in favor of “embedding” the value of the arts within local contexts, which has the advantage of gathering grassroots advocacy.³³

It seems then that advocacy for the arts succeeds best where it is an acknowledged part of the political process, and where consequently there is an abundance of research on the subject. The following case studies will illustrate the importance of those factors.

II. Best practices in arts advocacy network-building

We will look at successful examples of arts advocacy networks in the United States, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and Australia. In each case, we will see how the networks were built, what advocacy events or programs they have put in place and finally how they managed to build consensus on issues to be defended.

A. USA: Americans for the Arts (AFTA)

Advocating and lobbying for the arts in the United States of America can be done within some legal constraints. US legislation passed by Congress in 1976 defines lobbying as “communication with a legislator in reference to a specific piece of legislation with a request to support or oppose that legislation.” The other important regulation is the United States Internal Revenue Code Section 501 amended in 1990 stating that charities generally may not devote more than 5% of their expenditures on lobbying. However, nonprofit organizations operating under 501(c)(3) status and conducting their lobbying under 501(c) provisions of tax law are allowed to spend up to 20% of their annual budget on their lobbying activities. The law nevertheless allows 501(c)(3)

³² <http://www.culturalpolicy.org/pdf/policypartners.pdf>

³³ http://www.artsummit.org/summit2003/files/Chris_Madden_paper.pdf

organizations to inform candidates of the organizations positions and ask them to go on record in support of these positions; to send questionnaires to candidates and disseminate their responses, provided there is no indication of bias; to invite candidates to attend meetings and speak of issues of interest to the organizations. Also, individuals associated with an organization can lobby in their private capacity.

These regulatory caveats in effect allow for considerable leeway for nonprofits operating under 501(c)(3) status. Moreover, these organizations divide their activities between advocacy, which consists in the mere provision of information to decision-makers according to a common practice in American political culture, and which nonprofits can do themselves, and lobbying, which is done through volunteers and member citizens. Thus, lobbying is done at very little cost, never approaching the 20% limit. Also, lobbying can be done by approaching state officials as opposed to legislators.³⁴ Another strategy to circumvent this legal constraint is to create a 501(c)(4) organization which has no limit on its lobbying activities. The difference is that donations to a 501(c)(4) are not tax-deductible.

With this legislative framework and these alternative possibilities in mind, we will look at how AFTA developed as a network, how it organizes its advocacy and how it has succeeded in merging the voices of thousands of partner organizations in favor of the arts.

The emergence of the largest arts advocacy network in the United States

Americans for the Arts, an independent 501(c)(3) organization, was created in 1996 out of the merger between the National Assembly of Local Arts Agencies (NALAA) and the American Council for the Arts (ACA). The chairmen of NALAA and ACA had indeed found that there was some overlap and duplicated resources between their organizations. After discussions with the board about logistics issues related to offices and staff, and discussions about vision, the two organizations articulated a vision and mission that would retain the same staff and cultural identity, serve the same constituencies the parent organizations had done for some years, while having a national scope. Having this national scope and greater political clout through through a mobilized force backed-up by a large grassroots constituency, such was the idea behind the merger.³⁵

The network then continued to grow. In 2004, Americans for the Arts further incorporated two national arts organizations, the State Arts Advocacy

³⁴ <http://www.nasaa-arts.org/publications/mar06nasaa-advocate.shtml>

³⁵ Thanks to Mara Walker, Chief Planning Officer at American for the Arts, for this information provided during a phone interview on June 24th, 2008.

League of America (SALAA) and the National Community Arts Network (NCAN), a merger which was made possible thanks to a \$120 million gift from philanthropist Ruth Lilly for the development of AFTA. This gave rise to a new network within AFTA, the State Arts Action Network (SAAN) to develop arts advocacy at every level throughout the United States.³⁶ In addition, it has developed other advocacy sub-networks such as the Arts Education Network, or the United Arts Funds.

AFTA has thus grown into a non-hierarchical umbrella organization serving four types of constituents: arts 'enabling' organizations, i.e. local, state, regional and national arts organizations, key decision-makers in the public and private sectors, citizen activists, and strategic alliances as in the case of the US Conference of Mayors or the National Association of School Boards who offer very strong support to AFTA.³⁷ Its members include 439 cultural centers (national organizations defending the culture of population groups such as the African American Cultural Center), 277 national arts service organizations (professional associations defending a specific art form such as the League of American Orchestras, or general arts associations such as the American Arts Alliance), 6 regional arts organizations,³⁸ 56 state arts agencies³⁹ (arts councils at state level such as the Maryland State Arts Council), 59 arts service organizations at state level (such as the Indiana Coalition for the Arts), 3256 local arts agencies (local arts service organizations, municipal arts councils such as the Seattle Parks and Recreation Department), and 928 arts centers (representing the arts locally, such as the Lewiston Art Center). This network is supplemented by the 22,000 members of the Arts Action Fund—a number which is expected to grow due to some membership partnerships being formed— and 100,000 citizen activists who have been reached out to as part of the e-advocacy outreach effort.

Out of these constituencies, AFTA has built sub-networks of arts advocates by interest area or geographical area and cultivates connections between isolated individuals of a same area who pursue the same advocacy goals. AFTA first approaches them in an informal way to connect them, and then, as the new group grows and defines a professional networking agenda, AFTA adds on layers of formal structure through for example listservs which are a formal networking channel. The greatest, most formalized networks currently are the Arts Education Network, the Emerging Leader Council, the National Patrons Council, Public Art Network, State Arts Action Network which includes one advocate per state who receives support from AFTA to engage in advocacy activities, the United Arts Funds Council, and the United States Urban Arts Federation. These groups meet at AFTA's Annual Convention to inform other

³⁶ http://www.artsusa.org/news/press/2004/2004_03_29.asp

³⁷ http://www.americansforthearts.org/pdf/about_us/annual_report.pdf

³⁸ Arts Midwest, Mid-America Arts Alliance, Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation, New England Foundation for the Arts, Southern Arts Federation and Western States Arts Federation.

³⁹ Including Samoa, Guam, Virgin Islands, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Mariana Islands

constituents of the new issues affecting the arts at various levels. Some groups disappear when the issue is no longer topical. Some emerge, as in the case of art on higher education campuses, a group which is currently being organized and whose growth is closely monitored by AFTA. All these groups come to AFTA with their issues and AFTA sets up formal structures in which these issues are circulated among a diverse constituency to trigger a search an exchange of strategies.⁴⁰

Through Arts Advocacy Day, AFTA's annual arts advocacy event, the interests of other non-member arts advocacy networks are represented. A case in point is the National Association of State Art Agencies (NASAA)⁴¹ whose constituency consists exclusively of state arts agencies, to which it provides "knowledge services and leadership programs that help state arts agencies fulfill their many citizen service roles."⁴² NASAA provides its constituency with advocacy tips through its regular publication, *The NASAA Advocate*.

At another level, AFTA, NASAA and other arts services organizations take part in the Cultural Advocacy Group (CAG) which is an older coalition of some 60 arts organizations national arts and humanities service organizations which meets monthly to exchange news and information relating to federal cultural funding and policy and works to unify the voice speaking to Congress on behalf of the federal cultural agencies.⁴³ CAG first came together in 1980-81 as five arts advocacy organizations—NASAA and the precursors of AFTA—who decided to coordinate their efforts to secure funding for the NEA. Then other organizations joined, consisting of the most prominent discipline-specific arts organizations such as the League of American Orchestras and Dance America for example. CAG is the main platform bringing professional associations together. During meetings, they share information on legislative issues arising around their main focus: federal funding for the NEA and for arts education programs. Other issues have emerged such as the difficulties arising from electronic media and taxation, or healthcare. The issues coming out of those meetings are those which gained consensus; those which don't achieve consensus are dropped until they gain more momentum. The organizations participating in CAG also collaborate with AFTA on preparing issue briefs for Arts Advocacy Groups.

These networks do not see themselves as competitors in relation to one another, but as working in cooperation, especially on legislative issues. The relationship is not vertical, but could rather be described as more or less formal coalitions associating horizontally for various purposes.

⁴⁰ Interview with Anne l'Ecuyer, Associate Vice President of Field Services, Americans for the Arts, July 3rd, 2008. See also: <http://www.americansforthearts.org/networks/councils/>

⁴¹ Interview with Angela Han, Director of Research at the National Association of State Arts Agencies, June 26, 2008. See also <http://www.nasaa-arts.org/aboutnasaa/about.shtml>

⁴² <http://www.nasaa-arts.org/publications/2008-Funding-and-Grantmaking-Report.pdf>

⁴³ Interview with Tom Birch, Chairman of the Cultural Advocacy Group, July 9th, 2008.

The process of unifying the voices for the arts in the United States seems to have been carried out smoothly over time, motivated by the consensual rationale of gaining more political clout. With the growth of AFTA, the message articulated by advocates became increasingly coordinated at a national level. One must bear in mind nevertheless that arts advocacy at local level retains distinct arguments which are relevant to a particular community and therefore escapes efforts to unify advocacy efforts. While all organizations come together with grassroots lobbyists to advocate before legislators and decision-makers for support for the arts generally, this support breaks down into particular issues raised by funding and legislative contexts and backed-up by arts impact studies. To address those issues, AFTA has set a number of advocacy programs and events.

Advocacy Events and Programs

Americans for the arts offers support to the arts and facilitates advocacy on two levels. It channels advocacy efforts towards public officials. AFTA's efforts to promote the arts in the public sector consist in events in which it is directly involved, and the creation of web-based tools to enable grassroots advocates and lobbyists to make the case for the arts themselves.

Americans for the Arts produces annual arts advocacy events of national scope such as Arts Advocacy Day in Washington, DC, the Nancy Hanks Lecture, and the Public Leadership in the Arts Awards.

Arts Advocacy Day is no doubt the highlight of the arts advocacy calendar. In existence for 21 years along with the Nancy Hanks Lecture of Arts and Public Policy, it started during the Reagan White House years when government was challenging the need to use federal public funds to support the arts, and arts advocates realized the need to bring more attention to the value of public funding for the arts through a national series of lectures in Washington DC and an annual rally on Capitol Hill from grassroots across the country.⁴⁴

Over the years, Arts Advocacy Day has served a number of causes related to federal support of the arts: tax issues, NEA funding, arts education and international cultural exchanges. The Nancy Hanks lectures⁴⁵ on the other hand place these legislative issues in the broader framework of arts policy in general. They are personal testimonies by world-renowned artists of the importance of the arts in life. They started by defending federal support of the arts and restoring its legitimacy in the eyes of the public after it was undermined by the cultural wars. Then, these lectures moved on to making the case for the provision of arts in schools, and to securing the arts as a core, permanent part of public policy.

⁴⁴ Thanks to Nina Ozlu from AFTA.

⁴⁵ <http://www.artsusa.org/events/nancyhanks.asp>

Arts Advocacy Day is co-sponsored by some 90 national professional organizations representing thousands of other organizations and individuals also serving the arts. The process begins in September preceding the event, when letters of invitation are sent to hundreds of arts organizations and companies involved in the arts and arts education inviting them to co-sponsor Arts Advocacy Day. In return for their sponsorship of that event, which amounts to \$350, they receive certain benefits such as joining the legislative planning committee to help write issue briefs and insert the letters they write to Congress in the Congressional Arts Handbook, thereby gaining exposure. Then, the legislative planning committee starts meeting in November on a fortnightly basis and includes some 15 organizations from across the country which want to be actively involved in legislative issues. During these meetings, subgroups are formed to write the issue briefs forming the advocacy agenda. They examine the current situation regarding the issues discussed, examine the progress made on that issue since the previous year and in many cases include new research on the topic. Many issues are permanent issues, such as securing funding for the NEA and legislation in favor of the arts. Some new issues are added when a particular threat arises. These new issues are put forward by the professional community, for example the theatre or the broadcasting community which comes to the meeting and writes an issue brief. The committee is one of consensus and would rule out an issue if it was not agreed on by the entire committee, but this seldom happens thanks to the fact that issues are generally broad enough to have a wide impact. Also, when the political context has changed and funding is no longer threatened on one point, the issue is not retained in the advocacy agenda. The briefs are written in February and the Handbook assembled in March and then sent to Capitol Hill.⁴⁶

This event breaks down into several sessions. In 2008 for example, it started with some legislative training sessions, followed by the Nancy Hanks Lecture. The next day started with the Congressional Arts Breakfast on Capitol Hill, held in conjunction with the Congressional Arts Caucus. This event featured brief remarks by Members of Congress and celebrity guests. This Congressional Hearing was the second one in 12 years about the importance of investing in the arts. Then arts advocates went on to lobby their Members of Congress. During Arts Advocacy Day also, arts advocates are given the Congressional Arts Handbook of the year. In this handbook, one can read the letters that the national professional associations wrote to Members of Congress asking them to support legislation in favor of the arts. Then we can read the detailed arguments that the national arts organizations make for increased funding: the NEA, NEH, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, arts education funding through the US Department of Education, and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. These cases are followed by issue briefs on tax policy (encouraging charitable gifts to arts and culture; artists' fair-market deduction bills); education reauthorization (strengthening arts education in *No Child Left Behind*); international issues

⁴⁶ Interview with Narric Rome, Director of Federal Affairs at Americans for the Arts, June 25th, 2008.

(improving the visa process for foreign guest artists, cultural exchanges); and federal communications commission (protecting performing arts technology). These are general issues which are not advocated by a single organization in particular but by a number of professional associations which provide information on the issue. The next section of the Congressional Arts Handbook provides data on Members of Congress voting records on support of the arts. The Congressional Arts Handbook ends with research findings on the impact of the arts and with contact information, a new section which was added in 2007.

Over the years, while the original focus of Arts Advocacy Day has remained the same, *i.e.* bringing advocates from across the country to visit their Members of Congress and make the case for the arts, and while it is aided to some extent by the general political context, the event has gained weight by feeding a increasing amount of research into the debate and targeting the key Members of Congress in a more focused and effective way. What also makes Arts Advocacy Day so successful is the communications and logistical work ensuring that all advocates actually enjoy their visit to Washington DC and learn something. Their visit is made worth their while as they learn to advocate successfully through the briefing and training sessions and as they are put in touch with high-profile people in the field.

Another way of drawing public attention to the arts is through the Public Leadership in the Arts Awards,⁴⁷ an arts advocacy event organized in cooperation between AFTA and the U.S. Conference of Mayors. These awards are subdivided between the Gubernatorial, Mayoral and Congressional awards. They are given to reward the efforts of an elected official to advance the arts or arts education.

Apart from these events which heighten the visibility of the arts, AFTA created a grassroots advocacy platform in 2004⁴⁸ called the Arts Action Fund, a 501(c)(4) organization, to turn arts advocacy from a punctual event to a year-round process.⁴⁹ The Arts Action Fund became the bipartisan advocacy arm of AFTA with the ability to conduct advocacy campaigns and house a Political Action Committee (PAC) for the arts. Through the PAC, people can give money which goes towards making campaign contributions to politicians who have a record of supporting the arts. There is a general feeling that this carries weight in the political arena.⁵⁰

Individual citizens can become members of the Arts Action Fund and use the e-advocacy Center, called Art Action Center⁵¹ for various purposes: to ask Senators and Representatives to support a funding increase for the NEA or for

⁴⁷ http://www.americansforthearts.org/news/annual_awards/public_leadership/default.asp

⁴⁸ http://www.americansforthearts.org/news/press/2004/2004_10_04.asp

⁴⁹ http://www.americansforthearts.org/get_involved/advocacy/arts_action_fund.asp

⁵⁰ Interview with Gary Steuer, May 19th, 2008.

⁵¹ http://www.americansforthearts.org/get_involved/advocate.asp

the Arts in Education programs within the US Department of Education; to track legislation; to view voting records; and to sign up for e-advocacy alerts and updates. People approach Senators, Representatives or local officials by sending pre-written letters processed by a virtual toolkit called Capwiz. This tool also addresses presidential candidates to secure their commitment to the arts. Indeed, the Action Fund ArtsVote2008 initiative invites presidential candidates to detail their positions on the arts and arts education. It provides a checklist of opportunities for presidential candidates to work with the arts community.

Besides facilitating advocacy, the Arts Action Fund is also a communications and marketing tool. It hosts a national arts education public awareness campaign (PSA Campaign) called “The Arts. Ask for More.” A new series of public service advertisements designed to promote the benefits of arts education was announced on May 22, 2008.⁵²

AFTA has succeeded in recent years in persuading other organizations to merge on the strength of a common advocacy agenda and has also incorporated private-sector advocacy networks. It has further succeeded in drawing all kinds of constituencies into its advocacy effort, including very large groups of grassroots advocates through e-advocacy mechanisms. Although it exists side by side with the network of state arts agencies, and with the Cultural Advocacy Group, the general collaborative spirit which prevails between those networks facilitates consensus on the issue.

How AFTA builds consensus:

- It is politically independent and thereby totally committed to the arts world.
- It keeps an eye on each level of the arts scene—local, state, regional, federal—and facilitates network-building among organizations faced with common issues.
- It trains advocates at each level—from grassroots to professional—and is constantly developing the resources it provides each level so that more organizations are empowered to advocate for the arts.
- It places consensus above all particular interests when it incorporates or works with other networks.
- It includes all members in the process of defining issue briefs to be advocated for during Arts Advocacy Day.
- It favors broad and consensual causes, ie supporting increased funding, arts education or pro-arts legislation
- It produces arts impact research on a continuing basis.
- It has developed web-based tools enabling citizens to advocate for pre-defined causes.
- It involves high-profile speakers from the artistic communities and rewards funders from the public and the private sectors during prestigious events.

⁵² http://www.americansforthearts.org/news/afta_news/default.asp#item15

B. Sweden: The Swedish Joint Committee for Artistic and Literary Professionals (KLYS)

Arts advocacy in Sweden arises from a different political culture where culture has been an area of public policy under the Welfare State since the 1930s and the development of social democracy. The Labor movement has been influential in shaping the advent of cultural policy and consequently, a Ministry has been put in place to ensure democratic access to culture. The Welfare-State model of cultural policy was reasserted in the 1960s. The prevailing attitude towards cultural policy is in favor of a cooperation between the State, civil society, organizations and cultural professions while being until recently more suspicious about market regulation and private sponsorship. Advocacy and lobbying for the arts are a small-scale sector in Sweden where State funding of the arts is very high. Indeed, arts grants per capita are higher in Sweden than in all other countries which have state-funded arts grant-giving bodies such as Arts Councils.⁵³ Another element of context to be taken into account is that since Sweden joined the European Union in 1995, advocacy and lobbying have developed.⁵⁴

In spite of high funding, political support of the arts is not to be taken for granted. There is a fear that the political elites are also distancing themselves from the arts.⁵⁵ Indeed, since the end of 2006, culture has not featured in the electoral debates and since 2007, some programs have been discontinued and funding slashed. The cultural policy guidelines of the new right/centre/liberal alliance coming to power at the end of 2006 have been expected and the cultural field describes itself as being in a state of transition.⁵⁶ The way forward would seem to encourage a generally liberal direction, and a growing role ascribed to market and civil society agents. These factors make advocacy more important.

In this context, there was a rationale for lobbying and advocacy in the legislative field and that was the niche which KLYS has filled. KLYS has succeeded in building a network which ensures its authority to represent the artistic world in the political arena.

Emergence of the network

KLYS was created in 1959 “in order to increase the impact of cultural workers in union and cultural policy matters.”⁵⁷ The context was one where the

⁵³ Claire McCaughey, *Comparisons of Art Funding in Selected Countries: Preliminary Findings*, Ottawa: Canada Council for the Arts, 2005, <http://canadacouncil.ca/NR/rdonlyres/9C37F2C4-FB69-47C9-8227-EC8C46CAEACF/0/Comparisonsofartsfunding27Oct2005.pdf>

⁵⁴ Interview with Rebecka Svensen, Press Officer, Swedish Arts Council

⁵⁵ Carl Tham, “Speech—Gotland”, 18 May 2007, <http://www.klys.se/tal-carl.htm>

⁵⁶ Karin Enberg, President of KLYS, “Change and Transition”, <http://www.klys.se/tal-karin-enberg.htm>

⁵⁷ http://www.klys.se/about_klys.htm

working conditions of cultural workers were difficult and there was very little social protection. It has built upon this original mission statement and dealt with issues related to the rights of cultural workers.

KLYS describes itself as “an umbrella for 18 artist organizations representing about 30,000 individual members” whose mission is to “protect the importance of culture in society, to work for better access to culture and to safeguard the artists’ right to fair compensation for their work.”⁵⁸ It is financed by membership fees exclusively and receives no funding from the State. It sees itself as representing Sweden’s cultural life. It has no competitors. In addition, it has set up specific interest groups such as COPYSWEDE in the field of broadcasting and copyright to negotiate common agreements.

On occasions, KLYS collaborates with the Swedish Arts Council whose advocacy efforts consist in doing research and providing ministers with relevant information. While this collaboration is punctual or *ad hoc*, the relationship is described as being good⁵⁹. KLYS is also part of arts advocacy networks involving other countries in the Nordic region—the Nordic Council for Artists, the Nordic Culture Forum, and the European Council of Artists. Cooperation with the Baltic States, Russia and Poland is also being discussed.

Advocacy Actions

KLYS reaches out to the public sector very pro-actively. Its public-sector arts advocacy practices show KLYS’ authoritative position within formalized structures advocating for the arts at various levels—national, regional and European.

On the national level, KLYS’ advocacy agenda consists in meetings with the board and with the political sphere to which KLYS makes representations on behalf of its members. It is thus involved in direct lobbying, which it does at various stages.

As regards the formation of its national advocacy agenda, KLYS calls board meetings about ten times a year. During those board meetings, discussions take place representing the interests of the member organizations. The aim of the meetings is to distribute information among the members, form strategies and achieve consensus on an issue to take to government or the Parliament. The Board is sometimes supplemented by working groups, temporary or permanent. Then, at another stage, KLYS takes part in deliberations with the Department of Culture where it represents its members. It participates in the cultural policy-making process.

⁵⁸ <http://www.klys.se/english.htm>

⁵⁹ Interview with Rebecka Svensen, Press Officer, Swedish Arts Council, July 22, 2008.

While keeping its original focus in sight, its advocacy agenda has evolved over time to include new issues affecting the arts. In its first years of existence, KLYS started by lobbying for government grants for artists. Then it focused on legislative issues: copyright laws, taxation and benefits, labor market issues, social security, and media technology in relation to public service. Since 1963 also, it has been consulted on legislative proposals and therefore attends meetings of the cultural affairs committee of the Swedish Parliament. Notable examples of KLYS' successful lobbying are that movies can be broadcast without being interrupted by commercials, which KLYS showed to be in violation of copyright; also, KLYS secured a fee on blank tapes. Although it addresses new issues, KLYS has remained set on its original focus, namely protecting the rights of the cultural workers.

Beyond those lobbying activities, it also advocates for the arts in a more general way as it has an informational role towards the political sphere and the public. It indeed fuels the public debate, for example in the field of public libraries whose public status was threatened. It also organizes meetings and conferences on matters of cultural policy, although there is a sense that this is an area of activity which could be developed.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, it steers clear from arts impact research, refusing the instrumentalization of culture.

KLYS is also involved in many arts lobbying and advocacy actions above the national level. With its counterparts in the Nordic region—the Artists' Association of Finland (Suomen Taiteilijaseura), the Federation of Icelandic Artists (Bandalag Islenskra Listamanna, BIL), the Danish Arts Council (Dansk Kunstrådet) and the Faroese Council of Artists (Listasamband Føroya, LISA)—it meets at various platforms such as the Nordic Council for Artists which is in contact with the Nordic Council of Ministers.

KLYS, the Nordic Council of Artists' and the Baltic Writers and Translators convened as the Nordic Cultural Assembly together with artists, officials and civil servants. The aim of the last meeting in 2007 was to see how to safeguard the arm's length principle in decisions on art funding and monitor and influence the EU decision process.

In addition, the Nordic Culture Forum is a new network which met for the first time in 2006. It brought together key figures in Nordic culture.⁶¹ This is in the context of the Nordic culture ministers deciding to reform Nordic cultural cooperation. It is an annual event.

KLYS also takes part in the European Council of Artists (ECA). Founded in 1995, ECA describes itself as working for the interests of the professional artists in Europe. Through conferences, resolutions and reports, it provides information and a platform for dialogue among its member organizations, namely

⁶⁰ Interview with Peter Curman, former president of KLYS, July 9th, 2008.

⁶¹ <http://www.norden.org/webb/news/news.asp?lang=6&id=5974>

the artist associations of Europe. It also aims at influencing cultural policy makers on a European level.

These forums largely consist in gathering support in an expanding geographical area in order to advocate and lobby at the European level against European cultural policy. This is made clear by KLYS which is eager to stress the necessity of national and regional independence in the field of culture and to limit the impact of policy makers in EU who want to introduce what it perceives as “a doubtful European cultural policy”.⁶²

How KLYS builds consensus:

- It is independent from the State, so it is wholly committed to the arts world.
- It can lobby itself.
- It has gained great political clout in successful cases.
- It strongly emphasizes collaborative work, getting all stakeholders to “shout from the same spot.”
- Membership in KLYS is beneficial to organizations, especially small ones as KLYS provides legal services.
- KLYS is perceived as being representative of the whole cultural sector.

C. United Kingdom: National Campaign for the Arts (NCA)

In the United Kingdom, allegedly the birthplace of lobbying where citizens would assemble in the Westminster “lobbies” to petition their Members of Parliament, lobbying and advocacy have always been part of the political process, and more so over the past ten to fifteen years.⁶³ After the fields of health, women’s rights, and the environment, the arts sector has organized its advocacy network. In comparison with the United States, there is a stronger emphasis on advocacy as taking the form of public relations and communication rather than using the legal system.

The National Campaign for the Arts (NCA)⁶⁴ was formed in 1985 in the context of declining support to the arts under Margaret Thatcher’s government and in the context of the dismantlement of a tier of arts support, the metropolitan authorities. At the same time, the Arts Councils also started advocating in a more

⁶² <http://www.klys.se/Answers-from-KLYS-in-the-Communication2007-consultation.htm>

⁶³ Professor Appleby, Director of Mental Health Alliance, UK, “There is a growing culture of advocacy.” http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/youandyours/transcripts_2007_25_mon_03.shtml

⁶⁴ <http://www.artscampaign.org.uk>

proactive way through marketing, audience and market development, resource development, and by producing evidence of the contribution of the arts to social and economic agendas. The Arts Councils of England, Scotland and Wales have a number of staff working on advocacy full-time. An example of particularly successful arts advocacy is provided by the recent actions of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland. It has developed its advocacy and lobbying activities very effectively, to the effect that after a publication of a report called *Time for the Arts* marshalling facts and figures in support of increased funding for the arts in Northern Ireland, lobbying took place to secure funding for the arts in the upcoming budget. This culminated in a debate in the Northern Ireland Assembly in October 2007 stressing the impact that the arts can have in the communities and the need to redress public funding of the arts, and an ensuing motion asking for the government to take action. In addition, together with the arts sector and the support of many celebrated artists, it launched a campaign called “Keep our Arts Alive” to increase financial outcome for the arts through the Northern Ireland Budget 2008-11 and when the budget was published in January, funding for the arts had increased.⁶⁵ Likewise, in the Republic of Ireland, the Arts Council of Ireland has developed an arts advocacy program since 2006.⁶⁶

NCA describes itself as the “critical friend” of the Arts Councils.⁶⁷ Sometimes, it campaigns against it, but on occasions, they work in partnership. Like AFTA and KLYS, NCA describes itself as independent and representative, “the leading independent and UK-wide voice for the arts world in all its diversity.” It does not receive any public subsidy and is the only independent lobbying organization representing all the arts, a guarantee of its independence and its authority. It provides “a united voice for the arts, arts organizations and artists, staff and volunteers” and strongly emphasizes consensus: “only by speaking with a united voice can the arts truly be heard.”

Emergence of the network

NCA was formed in 1985 as a result of the merger between two lobbying organizations, the National Lobby for the Arts (NLA) and British Arts Voice (BRAVO). The network was started by six organizations which were discipline-specific such as the Association of British Orchestras. These organizations helped financially to set up NCA, and the CEOs of these organizations also donated their time and skills to NCA. Since 1997, NCA has been sustained entirely through membership fees and fundraising. It has about 550 member organizations, including organizations and individuals.

⁶⁵ Thanks to Nick Livingston, Director of Strategic Development, Arts Council Northern Ireland.

⁶⁶ http://www.artscouncil.ie/en/areas-of-work/actions/resource_organisations_actions.aspx#faq3

⁶⁷ Interview with Louise de Winter, July 22nd, 2008.

Activities and Events

NCA is composed of an executive office and a board it appoints in accordance with the needs of the organization. It relays information relevant to the arts scene to its members with whom it communicates on a weekly basis. Communication and public relations are a core element of its advocacy activities and events.

NCA's actions consist in lobbying the government, Parliament and the Arts Councils of the United Kingdom. It is also involved in more general advocacy activities consisting in providing information to its members and to the public through a research arm created subsequently.

NCA holds two monthly meetings with its board, and communicates the results of these meetings to its members among with other information in its weekly bulletin. In addition, it publishes a quarterly printed magazine which is a platform of discussion around a theme perceived to be of importance to the arts sector.

There are also a number of face-to-face events bringing together NCA and its members, such as seminars or meetings which are organized to as to obtain instant feedback on an issue. After monitoring the developments in the arts sector thanks to an on-going consultation with the stakeholders, NCA places items on its advocacy agenda if they are in keeping with its wider remit: increasing funding for the arts; securing the place of the arts in education; and demonstrating the value of the arts to public officials. Thanks to this broad remit, NCA prides itself on the consensus it builds among its members. At times, legal consultants are invited to discuss legal developments of relevance to the arts. Political representatives are also invited so that they may be informed.

NCA boasts excellent relationships with Ministers and officials in a range of government departments and with MPs and Peers. It uses these personal relationships to influence policy and legislation through delegations, position papers, briefings and consultation responses. In particular, it updates the Department of Culture, Media and Sports and other ministers whose remits impact the arts. It also keeps MPs informed of arts-related issues. Relationships with the Department and Parliament are described by NCA as being good in a system where political representatives expect to be lobbied.

It also produces research and briefings to help raise the profile of the arts at all levels. It also informs its members on issues relevant to their own development. Its arts research and education arm, set up in 2000, is called Arts Research and Education (NCARE). NCARE works with the sector to create projects and events and produce research and is supported mainly by foundations.

How NCA builds consensus:

- It is independent from the State
- It puts its small structure to effective use
- It places a strong emphasis on communication
- It has a strong record of success in achieving its goals

D. Australia: National Arts & Cultural Alliance (NACA)

As in other English-speaking countries, advocacy groups have been set up in Australia to address health, education or environmental issues. However, their place in the political process is debated as conservative interests tend to want to deny it. There has indeed been a recent criticism of NGOs which Australia calls advocacy organizations, and a questioning of the legitimacy of their influence on public policy in the context of tensions in some government-NGO relationships. In mid 2003, the Australian government started reforming legislation about charitable status, which affects a number of the advocacy groups. Many of them identified a clause designed to prevent charities from criticizing government policy. In addition to that unfavorable context for advocacy, grants to various “peak” organizations—meaning in Australia the most representative associations—were cut, while the government funded a think tank making the case against NGOs.⁶⁸

The arts world seized that context to try and build coalitions representing their interests. Australia tried to build the equivalent of the Canadian Conference for the Arts”, but it did not materialize. Then a coalition was created, the National Arts & Cultural Alliance (NACA)⁶⁹ which describes itself a national coalition of individuals, organizations, agencies and community groups involved in the areas of community cultural development. It was formed in recent years—2004 and restructured in 2008—to provide coordination at the national level in the context of the restructure of the Australia Council for the Arts. It has been endorsed by the arts sector across the country. It liaises with other arts and cultural organizations such as ArtsPeak, Arts Access Australia, Community Cultural Development Board.

⁶⁸ Bronwen Dalton and Mark Lyons, *Representing the Disadvantaged in Australian Politics: The Role of Advocacy Organizations*, Sydney: Centre for Australian Community Organizations and Management, University of Technology, Sydney, 2005.

http://arts.anu.edu.au/democraticaudit/papers/focussed_audits/200503_dalton_lyons_advoc.pdf

⁶⁹ <http://www.naca.org.au/>

Merging the voices

The Alliance was conceived in November 2004 in opposition to the Australia Council's "Arts Catalyst restructure". NACA achieved its goal in that respect in March 2005, securing its existence and defining its mandate. During the first half of 2008, it was being reformed to implement this mandate which is to promote, advocate and lobby for the arts nationally through networking, debate, research, consultation, communication and marketing strategies, grass-roots principles and governance structures.

Actions

Since 2004, it has organized meetings with hundreds of stakeholders across the country, and it lays emphasis on nationally coordinating the responses and initiatives arising from those consultations to cultural policy-makers—the Australia Council and other funding organizations.

It keeps a strong focus on its remit and will work only on needs characterizing the whole sector. Its purpose is to be a creative think tank. Therefore, it networks, organizes debates and engages practitioners, organizations and the non-arts sector through communication strategies. It also has a strong grassroots element. It prides itself on having a bottom-up approach along with bringing experts to the discussions to provide some information.

In the summer of 2008, it was announced that the organization was revived and many advocacy events were in store.

How NACA builds consensus:

- It arose out of a difficult context for the arts, securing support for its cause
- It places a wider remit above all particular interests
- It aims at a wide representation
- It places a strong emphasis on grassroots advocacy

Conclusions and Recommendations

Canada shares many of the infrastructures set up to support in arts in Commonwealth countries: an Arts Council which became supplemented with a

government department, a commitment to the arm's length principle and to the patron model developed in the typology of models of state support to the arts defined by Canadian scholars Harry Hillman-Chartrand and Claire McCaughey.⁷⁰

As in the United States, advocacy and lobbying in Canada are limited to 20% of a charitable organization's resources in time or budget. In Canada however, in an effort to clarify pressures exerted on the government, the Federal Accountability Act passed in December 2006 requires that anyone communicating with the government as a lobbyist must file a report on the communication with the Lobbyists' Registrars' Office within 20 days of the communication.⁷¹ One significant problem is that this law makes no difference between lobbying and advocacy and it is feared that the more general communication-driven advocacy may also fall under this new rule. In addition, regardless of the leeway permitted by this piece of legislation, lobbying and advocacy in Canada are surrounded by negative perceptions.

With Sweden, the Nordic countries and European networks such as the International Federation of Actors, Canada shares a history of advocacy for the arts. Indeed, as early as 1944, that even before similar efforts in other countries, a lobbying movement led by the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts gathered in Ottawa to advocate for a federal organization for the arts. This effort led to the creation of the Canadian Conference for the Arts.

On the research side, as in other English-speaking countries with a tradition in lobbying for the arts, research on arts impact in Canada is active. One example is the research conducted by Canadian company Hill Strategies whose latest report, dated March 2008, investigates the *Social Effects of Culture*.

Canada was then in a good position to develop similar arts advocacy networks as those described in this report. What happened then? Networks have not been able to extend to the whole country. Since the creation of the CCA, levels of arts administrations have multiplied but coordination is lacking because of several problems which set Canada apart from the foreign examples described above:

- Unlike that prevailing in the other countries examined, the Canadian Parliamentary system makes it difficult to lobby Members of Parliament.
- Unlike two other English-speaking countries which it emulates in other ways, namely the United Kingdom and the United States, there are negative perceptions of lobbying and advocacy.

⁷⁰ Hillman-Chartrand, H. & McCaughey, C. 1989. "The Arm's Length Principle and the Arts: An International Perspective - Past, Present and Future," in *Who's to Pay for the Arts? The International Search for Models of Support*, M.C. Cummings and J. M. D. Schuster, eds., New York: American Council for the Arts, p. 43-80.

⁷¹ <http://www.ccarts.ca/en/advocacy/bulletins/5206.htm>

- Unlike other countries with Arts Councils, there are no relationships between the Canadian Arts Council and arts advocacy.
- Unlike its foreign counterparts, CCA is not independent from the State which provides an important part of its annual budget.
- Unlike that of other countries examined, Canadian history has jeopardizing the articulation of a common cultural identity which would help to define wider, consensual remits.

Some of the problems are structural, but others are conjunctural and can be addressed. Arts advocacy is being placed on a firmer ground with some recent initiatives. Like its counterparts in other countries, the Canadian Council for the Arts describes itself as a leading arts advocate, and has a public and parliamentary advocacy program⁷² where journalists, media representatives, elected representatives and Canadians are informed about the activities of the Council and its clients. It appears before Parliamentary Committees on arts and cultural issues and invites people to write to the Prime Minister of Canada by giving his email address. In its advocacy resource kit published on its website, it gives tips on how to advocate, and how to build successful communication with decision-makers. But as elsewhere, it cannot be critical of the way the State supports the arts.

On the independent side, the Canadian Arts Coalition and Canadian Arts Summit reach out to a large constituency which also includes members of the corporate sector. As for the Canadian Conference for the Arts, it has the further asset of a long history of advocacy and research work.

To conclude, one can say that there is a wealth of arts advocacy work and resources in Canada which would gain significantly more effectiveness and clout by pooling their efforts to better serve the arts. To reach this objective, it would appear crucial to expand the networking outside the cultural sector as such to other stakeholders in Canadian civil society.

⁷² http://www.conseildesarts.ca/cgi-bin/MsmGo.exe?grab_id=0&page_id=611&query=advocacy&hiword=ADVOCATE%20advocacy%20

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