

# IFACCA Researchers' Workshop

HEC Montréal, 9:00 to 12:30 August 24-25, 2004

## Background

At its meeting Washington DC in April 2004, the IFACCA board unanimously supported the idea of holding a workshop that would bring together IFACCA research managers and coordinators to discuss arts policy research from an international perspective, to debate research needs and priorities, and to consider IFACCA's future research-related directions. Board member Mr John Hobday, Director of the Canada Council for the Arts, offered to host the workshop in Canada in August to coincide with two other cultural policy research meetings being held there:

- 1) The International Conference on Cultural Policy Research (ICCP), 25 to 28 August (<http://www.hec.ca/iccp/>); and
- 2) A workshop on the Initiative to Study the Social Effects of Culture (ISSEC), a joint project between the Department of Canadian Heritage, the University of Ottawa, and the Canadian Cultural Research Network (24 to 25 August).

All three meetings were at the HEC management school, Montréal ([www.hec.ca](http://www.hec.ca)).

The objectives for the IFACCA workshop were to:

- discuss arts policy research in general;
- provide updates on research work in progress within each agency;
- share knowledge and experiences;
- provide feedback on IFACCA's own research activities; and
- consider specific project proposals.

A variety of topics were on the agenda for the workshop, including: IFACCA's research activities, the D'Art process and D'Art research topics; arts and education research initiatives; statistics and indicators, based on the IFACCA discussion paper *Statistical Indicators for Arts Policy* ([www.ifacca.org/files/statisticalindicatorsartspolicy.pdf](http://www.ifacca.org/files/statisticalindicatorsartspolicy.pdf)); and other projects and initiatives to improve the sharing of research and information on cultural policy. A summary of the discussions is below.

## Discussions

### IFACCA's research activities

Participants reinforced the value of the D'Art program, in which IFACCA's network is used to help gather information on a particular question of arts policy. It was thought that asking the person who asked the question to draft a report on the outcome is good *in principle*, but that in practice it is difficult to implement, and may discourage resource-strapped agencies from making a request via D'Art. It was also thought that having the IFACCA secretariat draft responses can ensure a consistency in approach and quality of D'Art reports. Workshop participants raised specific issues of the D'Art program, including:

- 1) There is the potential for D'Art to be 'captive' to responses. More academically rigorous analyses would require more time to be spent on desk research and on brokering a wide-ranging response.
- 2) Respondents are not always sure about how to respond – both generally, and in instances when the response may have 'political' implications.

- 3) There is no formal arrangement that requires IFACCA members to respond to D'Art queries.

A number of possibilities were discussed to strengthen the program:

- A greater assessment of the quality of information supplied by respondents to D'Art queries, and fill information gaps with more desk research or further enquiries.
- Encouraging closer connections between the D'Art program and academics.
- More formal lines of responsibility for replying to D'Art questions.
- Look at how IFACCA can develop D'Art research topics more strategically – eg. align D'Art questions more closely to a collective research strategy for arts agencies.

Possible future D'Art topics that were discussed were:

- arts and education
- governance of arts organisations
- international comparison of sources of income for major performing arts organisations.

### **Arts and education research**

Workshop participants discussed arts and education initiatives in Australia, Canada, England, the Netherlands, Scotland, USA and Europe. A number of initiatives follow on from 'A Must or a Muse' conference, which was held in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, in 2001 (<http://www.cultuurnetwerk.org/amustoramuse/>), and were preparing for the UNESCO conference on arts and education in Lisbon in 2006.

It was agreed that IFACCA should undertake the following tasks with the Australia Council for the Arts:

- D'Art query on arts and education for release in 2004
- Explore establishment of an international arts and education online network, forum or other form of collaboration
- Help develop an arts and education mini-summit in Australia in 2005.

### **Cultural indicators**

Workshop participants discussed statistics and indicators in general, and heard updates on the work of EUROSTAT and UNESCO's Institute for Statistics.

Discussions focussed on a number of crucial points:

- tensions between research and policymaking in how statistics are developed and used
- the need to be clear about what is meant when using the term 'cultural indicators'
- the need to focus indicator development on essential statistics and indicators
- the need to clarify the purpose and objectives of indicators.

It was agreed that the IFACCA secretariat would finalise the discussion paper *Statistical Indicators for Arts Policy* based on comments made at the workshop and through feedback from others, and that the secretariat should investigate how to encourage information exchange on indicators, such as through a dedicated web-based forum.

### **Databases of cultural policy research**

Workshop participants considered the variety of mechanisms that currently exist for keeping track of recent and planned cultural policy research around the world, such as CPRO and Arts Research Digest. It was agreed that these databases fulfil several valuable roles, and that it would be desirable for IFACCA to collaborate where possible to develop a comprehensive international database of current and planned research in cultural policy.

Participants considered a formal proposal to develop an on-line database of experts in cultural policy research. The database would be an international ‘who’s who’ in cultural policy research, and would be updated regularly. Participants agreed that this could be a valuable way of sharing information on what research is being undertaken in cultural policy research, and who is undertaking that research. It was thought important that a biographical database, if developed, should be linked with bibliographical databases, such as those described above. Participants agreed that the idea should be progressed and presented to the IFACCA board.

### **European cultural cooperation portal**

Workshop participants also heard an update about the ‘LAB’, a four-year pilot project (2004-2007) to strengthen European cultural cooperation launched by the European Cultural Foundation (ECF). An essential part of the LAB will be an online ‘European cultural cooperation portal’. The portal will connect, promote and improve the visibility of existing cultural cooperation initiatives, projects, organizations and websites in Europe, and at the same time generate new topics and perspectives to encourage cross-border cultural cooperation.

### **Conclusion**

Participants considered the workshop a great success and agreed that similar workshops should be held in the future, perhaps to coincide with ICCPR conferences, or with future World Summits on the Arts and Culture. A number of topics for future meetings were suggested, including:

- Methods and issues of policy transfer between countries
- The objectives of arts policy
- The links and tensions between arts policy and arts management
- Audience development programs and initiatives

The IFACCA secretariat will be investigating options for future meetings, and will report on the workshop to the IFACCA board at its next meeting in Hanoi, Viet Nam, in October 2004.

The meeting closed with thanks to the Chair, Keith Kelly of the Canada Council for the Arts, and to venue host, François Colbert of the HEC Montréal. Participants then joined the ISSEC workshop for further discussion of theoretical and research issues surrounding the study and measurement of the social effects of culture. A report on that workshop is being drafted by the ISSEC partners and is due out soon.

Any comments and suggestions about the IFACCA workshop can be emailed to [info@ifacca.org](mailto:info@ifacca.org).