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Chair

Ms. Julie Dabrusin

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• (0845)

[Translation]

The Chair (Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.)):
Good morning.

Since it is 8:45 a.m., let's begin.

This is the 100th meeting of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage.

[English]

We are doing our study on cultural hubs and cultural districts in Canada. Today the first witness who were were expecting, Ateliers créatifs Montréal, is not here, but we do have with us today Small.

Isn't your name a fuller name than Small?

Ms. Heather Campbell (Program Manager, Small): It's Small or Culture of Small.

The Chair: That's what I thought, Culture of Small. We have Philip Evans, founder, and Heather Campbell, program manager.

From the University of Windsor, we have Ms. Veronika Mogyorody, professor.

Why don't we begin? Each group will have 10 minutes and we can begin with Culture of Small, please, for 10 minutes.

Ms. Heather Campbell: Thank you, everyone, for having us here today.

We are from Small. We are an organization that works with cultural heritage in small communities across the country. We look at the existing assets within small, rural, or remote communities, and we work with people within the communities to leverage those assets to help move their communities forward.

We're looking at revitalization strategies, often in communities that are facing resource closure or other transitions within their communities. They're facing economic transitions that need to happen. Often what we have seen in these communities is that cultural assets and cultural facilities can help with those transition strategies and help rejuvenate and revitalize the communities.

We're looking at some cultural hub ideas in small communities. I want to share with the committee today what we've seen and what we have seen as best practices within a lot of these communities. We wanted to propose a working definition of "cultural hubs" that is a bit beyond infrastructure or it's a different take on infrastructure.

Instead of just looking at the physical infrastructure of buildings, we wanted to look at a more holistic approach towards infrastructure.

We will touch on five things today. The first one is the physical infrastructure. The second is the idea of educational infrastructure within these facilities. The third is social infrastructure, support systems within the facilities. The fourth is operational infrastructure, which helps the facilities keep going into the future. The last one is market infrastructure, to help bring cultural products or cultural producers to a broader marketplace.

The first is physical infrastructure. This is something I think we're all familiar with when we talk about cultural hubs. It's the facilities that can be used for cultural activity. One of the things we see in small or rural communities is that a lot of physical infrastructure already exists. There are buildings in rural communities that are being underused and could be leveraged or repurposed as cultural facilities.

We're looking at things like churches, schools, and community centres. One example of this is the Grand Theatre in Indian Head, Saskatchewan. This was a theatre that fell on some hard times, and the community ended up buying the building and repurposing it as a bit of a cultural hub. Now not only is it a theatre, but it runs programs for local schools. It brings people from other regional communities together. It's more of a hub facility now, but it's reusing what already existed. It's not new infrastructure; it's a building that already existed within the community.

The second is educational infrastructure. We find it's important that these types of hubs provide programming for the community that reaches out to youth and newcomers. It provides broader programming to engage people in cultural activities. This goes beyond the bricks and mortar and really reaches into the world of innovation, and that helps support new businesses, cultural businesses that are operating within these communities.

One example of the educational style of programming is the Falls Brook Centre in Glassville, New Brunswick. It has a lot of educational programming that focuses on environmental and ecological programs, bringing in school groups, youth, to learn within the centre, which helps support and revitalize the community.

The third component is social infrastructure. This is about building networks within communities, reaching out beyond the physical infrastructure again. This has a lot to do with engaging new residents in rural communities, attracting new residents to rural communities, and retaining youth within rural communities, so retaining current residents within these communities.

Developing these types of networks leads to volunteerism, which leads to mentorship within the communities. Again it's programming that goes beyond the physical bricks and mortar of a cultural hub. One example is the Canadian Centre for Rural Creativity, which is under development right now in Blyth, Ontario. One of the main focuses of this centre—it's a cultural hub, a cultural facility for the community—is about retaining youth. That's something the community really struggles with right now. A lot of youth are leaving Huron County, in Ontario. One of the programs that they want to have encompassed within this facility is something that can help retain youth within the community. Again, it's a very small community, so it's a challenge that a lot of these communities face.

The fourth component is operational infrastructure. Often we see hubs start up in small communities and they get funding or a capital campaign comes together for the bricks and mortar, yet they struggle when they come to operational programming. Moving forward with their programming, they do not have the same level of support or the same level of funding as they did for the actual bricks and mortar campaign.

When we're looking at hubs in smaller communities, it's important that we consider the future and how that programming can reach into the future and what kind of challenges are going to arise from a new building or a repurposed building.

● (0850)

One example of this is a project in Chapleau in northern Ontario. This is a church building. The church now has a restaurant and a little artisan market in the basement. They've really diversified what they offer to the community. As the church found a new use, it was hit with a high level of municipal taxes. A church itself is tax exempt within a community. Now that it has new uses in there, it has to pay a high level of municipal taxes. This isn't something that they saw the impact of going into this process. They've responded to the community's needs. They're offering a service to the community, and they're being forced to pay something and to impose these costs on their user groups that they're not really prepared to manage at this point.

The last thing we want to touch on is market infrastructure. In small or rural communities, and remote communities especially, there's often not an audience or a significant market that can support a lot of cultural activities or cultural small businesses. What we see is a need for market infrastructure that can connect rural communities to urban centres or connect networks of smaller communities so that they can build their market capacities, build their audiences, and build connections with collectors or supporters. Again, this is a form of infrastructure that goes beyond just the normal hub concept and really connects different hubs or different facilities.

One example of this is Dorset Fine Arts. Dorset Fine Arts is located in Toronto, but they are a marketing or sales branch of the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative, located in Cape Dorset. This is a physical extension of their marketplace. They're able to reach into the Toronto marketplace through this facility in Toronto, but the hub, the creation, and the artists are located in Cape Dorset. It's just extending that market reach, which is quite important.

Those are five examples of different forms of infrastructure that we see the need for, again, going beyond the typical definition of

infrastructure when you look at cultural hubs. We wanted to give those examples to the committee today just so you can understand the specific components that we see in small and rural communities when you look at cultural development and cultural rejuvenation.

I'll leave it there.

The Chair: Thank you very much for that.

I got excited when I saw that, because Cape Dorset Fine Arts is based in my community. I went to visit them recently; that's an interesting spot.

Our next witness is Professor Mogyorody, and you have 10 minutes.

Dr. Veronika Mogyorody (Professor Emeritus, University of Windsor): I want to thank the committee for inviting me to speak about cultural hubs and districts. I come as a citizen of the city of Windsor, a former member of several non-profit organizations, and as the founder of the visual arts and the built environment program for the University of Windsor.

Over the last 30 years, there have been ongoing discussions about the revitalization of older industrial cities like Windsor, Ontario, and the role cultural hubs can play in reinventing communities within the context of downtown rejuvenation, historic preservation, and tourism. We have learned about the importance of nurturing urban distinctiveness, providing a workforce for cultural industries, and attracting a creative class. Yet despite the theoretical rhetoric in urban planning, economic development, and arts and culture literature, significant city initiatives have proven to be difficult to pull off. The discourse has outpaced our communities' ability to implement change. The buzz around creative hubs is certainly promising. What is difficult is strategically addressing public investment and careful use of resources.

Few small to mid-size cities have the expertise to bridge the various federal or provincial bureaucratic structures, or work with the multitude of constituencies in developing effective cultural policy. Recognizing their lack of relevant resources, they enthusiastically commission cultural master plans from consultant planning and management firms, with the goal of creating strategies that match their community's vision. In some instances, these professionally produced plans have been helpful in gathering input and generating ideas. In other instances, they've had little impact and a short afterlife.

Occasionally, useful cultural asset maps are produced and potential cultural districts identified. However, because of their cost and the effort required, they are often not updated or maintained, making their usefulness short-lived. Those areas labelled as cultural districts are seen as important anchors, recognized for their facilities and their mixed-use amenities and services. Enthusiasm for cultural districts is generally quite high, but the necessary ongoing resources to support their needs and monitor their success is regularly left wanting.

As is the case in Windsor, the major cultural institutions are used in promotional material for the downtown core. The survival of these non-profit organizations relies heavily on support from established foundations, local, provincial and federal granting agencies, arts and cultural philanthropy, and incomes such as memberships, performances, art sales, and community events. They are pressured by the constant threat of financial reductions by their patrons and funders, as well as by decreasing earned income that could affect their continued existence.

Survival has meant doing more with less and doing some things differently. These have included shortening performance runs, relying on permanent collections, altering hours of operation, sharing production and facility costs, and in some instances, merging institutions. Now, not all of these are problematic, but they are certainly taxing and stressful.

Frequently, the argument is made that granting agencies focus their efforts on larger public cultural organizations rather than on modest neighbourhood and community cultural hubs. The concern is that if cultural placemaking is actually important, then creating more humble spaces specifically for the arts is absolutely essential. Artist centres that provide a multitude of services and opportunities can contribute to downtown revitalization. Providing spaces to work, produce, rehearse, meet, learn, and mentor are cost-effective ways to contribute to the cultural economy.

• (0855)

These centres play an important role in encouraging innovation and production, by becoming an asset to the neighbourhoods where they are situated. Understanding the social dimension of cultural production is critical in encouraging the development of cultural hubs and the emergence of cultural districts.

Centres contribute to interaction, the exchange of ideas, collaboration, and the testing and manufacturing of new products. The activities within these centres have a positive effect on the individuals using them and can spill over into the communities in which they are located. The formation of informal relationships between users of the centre could encourage the participation of neighbourhood residents and strengthen new ties.

Just this past Thursday, the University of Windsor formally opened the School of Creative Arts in its downtown location. The City of Windsor has been active in forming partnerships with both the university and college, in searching for creative solutions to revitalizing its downtown. It is noteworthy that it has been arts and culture that have made the bridging between town and gown a real possibility. St. Clair College's Centre for the Arts, its MediaPlex, and now, the university's School of Creative Arts are potential catalysts for stimulating new development, but this is just the first step in any renewal process.

Residents and businesses in the urban neighbourhoods surrounding these newly created cultural hubs deserve access to the opportunities these facilities offer. This requires academic institutions, the artists, the existing non-profit culture sector, the local BIA, and neighbourhood citizens and leaders to seize this moment in continuing the conversation about arts and culture as a critical element of the city's life.

Academics, like Florida and Spencer, have written about the connection between population size and a creativity index and how larger cities and regions have a built-in advantage, in terms of cultural economic development. However, for those of us who reside in small to mid-size cities, it is time to align land use, zoning, building codes, housing, and transportation planning, so that we can build a new cultural infrastructure.

Many of the tools that enable artist spaces are lodged within various municipal departments, like cultural affairs, planning and building services, economic development, parks and recreation, district school boards, and multicultural agencies. According to Markusen and Johnson, local governments and agencies need to transcend traditional turfs to help facilitate culture-driven urban revitalization. Arts and culture need to be able to operate in several domains at the same time, thereby challenging and transcending traditional borders and promoting new life in the city.

As you may be aware, Windsor shares a border with the city of Detroit and we have been carefully watching our U.S. neighbour. For some, the large-scale purchases, refurbishment, and upgrades in downtown Detroit have been phenomenal. The transformation of the once-desolate urban core into a hip corridor of real estate investment has certainly drawn international recognition and much praise.

For others, the complex problems that have faced Detroit haven't disappeared. They've simply been relocated elsewhere. The argument made is that although racial and ethnic segregation is beginning to decrease, economic segregation is still a major issue. This is a factor that Windsor cannot afford to ignore.

In conclusion, all this raises the question, is this a zero-sum game? Does this necessarily put the smaller centres in competition, especially economic competition, with the larger centres and institutions? Why not see them as complementary? Can we not design a support for the arts in such a way that we encourage a synergistic relationship benefiting all?

Thank you.

• (0900)

The Chair: Thank you.

[*Translation*]

We will now begin the question and answer period. Each person will have seven minutes.

We will start with Mr. Breton.

Mr. Pierre Breton (Shefford, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

My thanks to the witnesses for being here and for their presentations.

Let me start with you, Ms. Mogyorody. In your presentation, you indicated that you were one of the people who took part in revitalizing several buildings at the University of Windsor. I am interested in knowing how that helped the young people enrolled in your institution to learn and how it may have helped the institution attract those students. I think that was one of the purposes people had in mind.

Has there been a study on the effects of the major revitalization that was done as a result of your expertise?

● (0905)

[*English*]

Dr. Veronika Mogyorody: The School of Creative Arts just opened. We don't have a great deal of information at the moment. What we're excited about is that many community groups have started to introduce themselves to the centre. By doing so, they're starting to use it for activities.

With St. Clair College, the centre for performing arts and the arts has been downtown for several years now. There has been considerable literature talking about the impact upon a city when you bring universities to the downtown.

The problem with it is that it's a very short-term component, in the sense that it helps very small restaurants and businesses in that area, but if it's not effectively done by working with community organizations in planning in a holistic manner, the community will only experience a very small benefit. I thus think your question is very timely.

I think it will have a benefit. We have a team in place at the moment that is going to do a longitudinal study of the impact. We're hoping that by working with some of the other groups, including the Windsor arts council, we'll be able to move forward.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Breton: Thank you.

Before I move to Ms. Campbell, I would like to congratulate you on your professional career, Ms. Mogyorody, as well as for the prize you received in 2015.

Ms. Campbell, I am trying to understand the nature of your organization. It is not clear to me. It does not seem to be a cultural centre, but rather an organization that seeks to help rural communities to revitalize themselves or to develop their most valuable assets in their regions.

What is the exact nature of Small? Is it a not-for-profit organization, a private institution, or something else? Can you give us an example or two of the things your organization has done in municipalities or rural villages?

[*English*]

Ms. Heather Campbell: That's an excellent question.

As a not-for-profit organization, Small grew out of a heritage architecture firm based in Toronto called ERA Architects.

A heritage architecture firm often looks beyond the bricks and mortar of a heritage building when we work in the architectural world, and that's why there's the focus on cultural heritage. This

focus extends beyond just looking at a building. It's looking at the use of a building, the memories people have of a building, and the value of a building to a community.

Taking that framework and that frame of reference, this not-for-profit—Small—applies that to communities. In applying that kind of cultural heritage value assessment to communities, when we consult with small communities, we identify the values within that community and how they want to bring that forward. It's looking at the roots of a community and where it evolved from and then understanding how that can move forward.

Again, we're looking at a lot of post-resource communities that are going through transition as they lose natural resources or their reliance on natural resources. That's the type of consultation work we do.

We do a lot of consultations with community groups. For example, for the Chapleau church we saw earlier, we worked with them to do a community consultation to understand what they wanted to see and what was lacking within the community and then to bring some new uses into that building to help answer some of those needs.

We're working with a series of churches in northern Ontario right now that are facing a similar situation. The congregations and the population are declining, but the buildings and the symbolism they have are of great value to the community.

It's understanding what can happen next with those buildings that can speak to the community needs and extend that cultural use of the building. That's why we're looking at this idea of cultural hubs. Could those buildings become cultural hubs moving into the future?

You're right that we do not operate a cultural hub building—that's not the role of the community—but we're galvanizing, attracting, and trying to support that type of use within the community, because we see it as an answer to a lot of those transitional questions or situations that these smaller communities are in now.

Does that help clarify it?

● (0910)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Breton: Yes, absolutely. Thank you.

I really wish you operated in my constituency. A number of municipalities could greatly benefit from expertise such as yours to create added value and to showcase the heritage that already exists. My congratulations for what you do.

Do I have any time left, Madam Chair?

The Chair: You have half a minute.

Mr. Pierre Breton: I will give it to my colleague Mr. Van Loan.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Van Loan.

Hon. Peter Van Loan (York—Simcoe, CPC): For my seven and a half minutes, I'll start with Small, and ask you briefly. In Ontario they have an initiative for community hubs. We're talking about cultural hubs.

In the context of small towns, it occurs to me that perhaps there should be a combination or merger of these ideas, because it's hard to think of small towns producing stand-alone, viable cultural hubs that can float on their own. I'm wondering if you could comment on that.

Ms. Heather Campbell: Yes. I think that's an excellent question and point.

Yes, we are following the community hub initiative within Ontario. I think a lot of the definitions we've laid out today in looking at a holistic cultural hub really are quite parallel.

When you look at community hubs, there often is an emphasis on community health and that type of programming. With successful cultural hubs in small communities you see that as well, that type of whole community engagement and that holistic view also, again, extending the definition of "cultural".

There's a lot of overlap in small communities, even when you look at the people within them. The key players within these communities wear many hats and share many roles, so when you look at a community hub, you often see that type of human infrastructure that extends into many different roles.

People who are involved in what we consider arts and cultural activities are also often community builders, or they're involved in the health, the social services, or the educational sector.

In that type of overlap, I think you're quite correct. There's a parallel.

Hon. Peter Van Loan: My next question goes to both witnesses.

In your case you're dealing with a lot of significant buildings, like churches and so on, that are running out of their original uses.

Professor Mogyorody, you referenced Detroit, where there has been a lot of restoration of genuine heritage buildings as part of their urban revitalization. In the American context almost all of those heritage restorations have involved something called the heritage restoration tax credit. Small, you've referenced some of the difficulties of viability in these adaptive reuses of heritage buildings.

What could be the role of a heritage restoration tax credit? Could that make a big difference in these contexts? I say this with some bias, having sponsored a private member's bill that originally had support at second reading, but then many of my friends on the other side changed their minds and did not support it, so it's now been defeated in the House.

I'll go to Small first. You probably know about—

Mr. Philip Evans (Founder, Small): I can start with that. Thank you. That's a great question.

I think it would help. I should mention that the program we've been exploring here for some time now is one that was being mirrored south of the border with some institutions. Actually, Frank and Deborah Popper, out of Princeton, were taking a series of communities and trying to understand the impacts of tax incentives and individual risks taken by creative entrepreneurs, a program we were very much interested in and running with. These investments and these kinds of programs, and results of cultural products are an investment in people. They're an investment in a cultural economy. We've seen a focus on the adaptive reuse portion of these projects.

This program has been set up to focus more on the idea of putting the use back into adaptive reuse, so it's a critical piece, but it's one that needs to be matched. It's about incentivizing risk as opposed to removing that risk, and that's a very delicate piece to play with.

• (0915)

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Professor Mogyorody.

Dr. Veronika Mogyorody: At the moment in the city of Windsor we have core cultural areas, such as the Art Gallery of Windsor and the Windsor Symphony Orchestra, which is located in the Capitol Theatre, a restored building. The City of Windsor has spent a considerable amount of money refurbishing it.

There are small groups in the community that are in the neighbourhoods, not necessarily part of the core, but where there school districts community centres or cultural centres. They may not necessarily own their building—they rent their building—but they need incentives. We're hearing from some of the constituents that if there are property tax exemptions for them in terms of the rental of the unit, there's an extended tax rebate or there's a period where some of the organizations can be exempt from taxes for a certain period of time. Although I think there are many things in place for the larger institutions and the larger non-profits, it's the smaller ones that need help. I think Small—I think I would like to have them in our backyard—would be very helpful, but on a neighbourhood level rather than specifically on a city level.

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Focusing on the downtown, you talked all around it, but you didn't talk specifically of it. Windsor has been working on this cultural district. You have your sculpture garden, you have the Chimczuk Museum, and the art gallery consolidated, you have a heritage building there, you have several university buildings and so on. Can you tell us a little bit about that Windsor experience, clearly trying to create this cultural hub district—not a single building, but rather a district?

Dr. Veronika Mogyorody: I think the current mayor over the last while has identified the fact that we need resources. A sizable amount has been put into giving funds not only to the core elements but to the neighbourhood communities. For example, over the next three years, over \$1.5 million each year is going to be designated. There's a new granting organization out of the city that meets twice a year to give funding for it, but I think effort has to be spent on the smaller areas. The cultural district does exist, but there are not services—

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Is it a success?

Dr. Veronika Mogyorody: I'm not sure I can say that it's a success because I don't think it's come to its fruition yet.

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Okay.

The Chair: You're at the end of your seven minutes. You have the half minute or you can just pay it forward.

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Keep going.

Dr. Veronika Mogyorody: I think we're there. I think it's very dynamic. There have been several attempts, but we also don't have the philanthropy in the community either. We have to find ways we can get investment into the community, otherwise the major core non-profit organizations will stabilize the community but they won't be an incentive to bring people into the community.

The Chair: Great. Thank you for that.

[Translation]

Now it is Mr. Nantel's turn.

You have seven minutes.

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Thank you, Madam Chair,

My thanks to both organizations.

[English]

The first question I want to ask Ms. Campbell and Mr. Evans is very short. You seem to bring a very valid solution, like Mr. Breton said, for small communities, and anybody would like to see you coming.

[Translation]

I am going to continue in French, seeing that you have the interpretation.

Do you not think that it would be good to see the federal program lead to the establishment of very specific objectives and to budgets being allocated to municipalities, through the provinces, of course, so that they could meet them? My fear is creating white elephants.

• (0920)

[English]

It is often said, “new ideas in old buildings”, but if you have a new building, they say, “It's going to be great. You're going to have a big container,” and there is this sterilizing of the whole thing. Do you think it would be better to have a charter coming from Canada and rolling out to the municipalities?

Ms. Heather Campbell: I think that's a great question and a really interesting idea. One of the first things that we always say when we go to communities is that the answers are within, that the answers—and “answers” is a strong word—already exist, or the solutions already exist. The people, the buildings, and the assets within communities are what drive the communities forward.

I quite understand your point about the white elephants. Bringing in something new is often not the solution that it appears to be. I think this goes back to the comments that we were making about operational funding and programming within these buildings. The idea of their longevity is quite essential.

To your point, I think allowing or providing municipalities, or groups or individuals within the municipalities, with the ammunition to move these projects forward is essential because we often find that there is one change-maker, driver, or organization that can really create lasting change within a community. They may define it slightly differently than their next-door community or a large urban centre, and the needs are quite different in many cases.

I think your point is quite valid, and I think the municipalities, or smaller organizations or even regional groups in municipalities, really can identify a lot of these solutions.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Nantel: Municipalities have often expressed concerns about high streets that are more and more deserted because people

are going to the bigger spaces everywhere or ordering online. When I think of all the storefronts, I think of neighbourhoods that naturally gentrify. Take a poor neighbourhood, for example; artists move in, the neighbourhood goes upscale and it becomes more and more fashionable to live there. Then rents increase, the artists can no longer afford to live there because it has become too expensive, and the stores end up closing. It's a vicious circle.

I believe that programs like Rues principales are trying to revitalize high streets. However, do you not subscribe to the idea that commercial spaces that are emptying and that, by definition, are very visible because they are located in the heart of our communities, could be rented to artists as creative spaces? Actually, I will let Ms. Mogyorody answer that question.

I went on a tour of Old Detroit, where they have created the Heidelberg Project. The neighbourhood could not have been more residential. I feel that the community art project suffered because it was hard to access. You actually had to be quite daring to get there. Personally, I was often afraid when I was driving along Heidelberg Street.

Is that not a job that has to be done? What do you take away from what they have accomplished in Detroit? It is just across the river from you. Heidelberg is probably the most miserable neighbourhood in Detroit. Do you feel that the Heidelberg Project has been a success?

[English]

Dr. Veronika Mogyorody: Detroit is interesting because if you read *The New York Times*, if you read all the major papers, it's probably touted as one of the most important comebacks that has occurred in the last two decades. I would concur that some of that is quite possible, but it's in a very small area, so what we're looking at is an area.... For example, the QLine that they've put in only runs about 5,000 metres, and although that's very nice, it's a very short distance.

Detroit came around primarily from the impetus of a philanthropist, Dan Gilbert, who put a sizable amount of money into relocating his firm, Quicken Loans. When he did that, he was able to draw other things from the suburbs. The literature also indicates, when we talk about zero-sum gains.... If you look at some of the areas in the suburbs outside Detroit, you see that what that's doing is removing from one area and putting into another area. There are some people who are concerned about the gentrification of the downtown. It's absolutely phenomenal. It looks great. From a cultural and racial perspective, it's becoming more integrated, which is phenomenal. But what we find is that the outer core is still a very low-income base, and a lot of the areas that were communities, even though they were low-income communities, are being destroyed as that's occurring.

Many of us in the city of Windsor are looking at the positive attributes with that but realizing that we're a multicultural district. Windsor is known for its multiculturalism. As Small has indicated, we really need to have all the stakeholders in the room at the same time to talk about this. It cannot be the core arts organizations leading it or exclusively the local government, but it has to be all the multicultural components and all the individuals who help form the arts.

● (0925)

[Translation]

The Chair: You have one minute left.

Mr. Pierre Nantel: Okay, thank you.

[English]

You referred to Johnson and Marcuse. Were you referring to Judith Marcuse?

Dr. Veronika Mogyorody: Yes.

Mr. Pierre Nantel: Judith Marcuse is very active. She's a strong advocate for bringing arts to a healthier life and not only to a professional practice. When I was parking my car in the Heidelberg Project, I can tell you that some neighbours told me, "We're living here. Get the fuck...." These issues are real.

Ms. Campbell, I saw you nodding at Mrs. Mogyorody's remarks. Do you want to add anything?

The Chair: You have about 20 seconds. Sorry about that.

Ms. Heather Campbell: I think one thing that's important in smaller communities is diversification, and I think that often helps with some of the economic disparities that you see within communities. The idea of economic or cultural diversification in all senses of the word, I think, is quite key, and I'll leave it there.

The Chair: Thank you.

Now we are going to Ms. Dzerowicz.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Thank you so much.

I come from the downtown Toronto area, the riding is called Davenport. It used to be a very industrial area. I have the Junction Triangle there. Artists literally recreated and reimagined the whole community. The only reason it's the coolest neighbourhood in the whole country is because of artists, and they didn't get any support from anyone.

A few years ago I co-founded an environmental group, and because I needed inspiration I actually ended up having a little desk in a place called the Centre for Social Innovation, CSI. I went there because I wanted to be inspired by everybody else who was trying to do really innovative, great things.

This is an interesting study for me. On the one hand, the question really is, how can the federal government help to support and develop these types of cultural hubs? On the other hand, the question is, how do we get out of the way and allow artists and groups to actually get together and do what they need to do for their respective communities?

When I hear people talk about different models in different cities, I don't automatically think they should be replicated in our cities. I have the Green Line that is being created through hydro corridors in my riding. I think it was based on the Green Line in Brooklyn or New York, or someplace or other, but we're doing it with our own twist.

If you look at the Centre for Social Innovation as an example, they've been really creative about how to raise money. Their continued success is all based on how well they continue to tap into the community that needs them, how well they continue to evolve,

and how they take advantage of the resources around them and keep pushing the boundaries.

For me, there's this huge part that says I want to be as helpful as possible at the national level, but I also want to get out of the way a bit as well. When we talk about small communities, there have to be enough people in those communities who really care.

In my community, it was the owner of two strip bars who funded all the artists in the community because he wanted it to be a beautiful community. It would be nothing anybody would ever think of, that this would be the person who would actually do it. He was a very Catholic man. You would have never thought he would do that.

I'm grappling with this a bit in terms of how we as a government can help create some of those conditions. Maybe some of those funding mechanisms might be available, that allow some flexibility. Parts of me also think that because cities are creatures of the provinces and constitutional, are there some things we need to lessen up from that perspective as well? I just want to put some of those elements on the table and maybe have both of you react to it. That's where I'm sitting right now. I want to be helpful, but I'm not quite sure yet how we can. I'm not sure if you guys want to react.

● (0930)

Mr. Philip Evans: That's some great insight there. It's actually an amazing transformation, what has played out in the Junction Triangle. There's something a little different. The needs in a rural community are different, in some cases, from those of an urban setting, particularly when you have a growing economy and you have those kinds of resources available. It's one thing to plan for the future, do studies, and invest in arts and culture, those things that seem indirect in terms of the return on investment. In that type of urban setting, it has been a very Toronto pattern of growth: follow the artists, and that's the cue for the developers. In a rural setting, where in many cases you do not have a growing economy necessarily, and in some areas it's retracting, we're acknowledging that there's a different role to be played and maybe a different response from something we're experiencing in the urban setting.

The CSI is doing absolutely wonderful things. It has a bang-up model that it has been working with. It would be great to see more of that. We're seeing a burgeoning of that in many cities across Canada right now.

There might be a different type of response in terms of whether you step aside in the rural context. Once upon a time, many of us lived in rural Canada. In the last 50 years or so, we've seen a resettlement of sorts into urban areas. As we all know, 80% of us are living there. The program grew out of this question: what was our exit strategy? Do we have a larger responsibility, one that was about managing resources and one that was about understanding what these places could be and become? In fact, the rural context might need a different type of response.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Are there any other comments?

Dr. Veronika Mogyorody: I like the fact that you used the environmental movement as part of this reference. A lot of environmental organizations or social justice organizations have a broad understanding of the major picture, but they all approach it from a very different perspective. In some instances, they work together, and in other instances they're very focused on their specific component.

In areas where the arts and culture are concerned, especially when they're not a cohesive group at the moment—they're working individually—I think what they need is support to get them to talk, not necessarily dictate what decisions they come up with, but offer opportunities for them to gather and support each other.

The CBC has a wonderful program called *Still Standing*, which I watch all the time. Everybody takes a different approach to that. Even with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, as cities, each of them views themselves very, very differently. With Ontario, we do not use the Toronto model, because it will never apply to us, not in a million years.

I think how the government can assist is to give opportunities in terms of allowing the groups to come together; give them support and funding for that.

If I can digress, we have an instance in the city of Windsor where some fellow, an artist, has turned his garage into a gallery. It's being used in the community. People come from afar. He's not making very much money, but nobody knows about it; it's only through word of mouth.

Promotion and support are important components. I think that the government can find ways to help those initiatives.

The Chair: I'm going to have to cut it there because we have to move on to our next panel.

I want to thank all of you. It was very interesting, and a great way to set us off on how to go about this study on cultural hubs.

Thank you very much.

We're going to suspend for a couple of minutes while we get our new panel together.

• (0930) _____ (Pause) _____

• (0940)

The Chair: We have a full panel, so we're going to get started right away.

Thank you to our new panel for coming to talk to us on our study of cultural hubs.

From 312 Main, we have with us Ashley Proctor.

[*Translation*]

We now have Caroline Salaün and Claude Bélanger from the Coopérative Méduse.

[*English*]

From Qaggiavuut we have Vincent Karetak, Laakkuluk Williamson Bathory, and Ellen Hamilton.

We will begin with Ms. Proctor, please, for 10 minutes.

Ms. Ashley Proctor (Executive Director, 312 Main): Thank you.

Although I consider Toronto my hometown, I'm joining you from Vancouver, B.C. today, where I've been working for the last three years to lead the development of Canada's largest and most inclusive co-working community—312 Main, a 105,000-square-foot property owned by the City of Vancouver located at Main and Cordova in the heart of the Downtown Eastside. It also happens to be the former Vancouver police headquarters, and it has been sitting vacant since 2010.

The building itself is quite imposing—a brutalist design, originally intended to be a display of power and protection. However, being located at the heart of Canada's poorest postal code and at the epicentre of an opioid crisis, in the midst of extreme poverty and homelessness, and with its ties to the ongoing inquiry for missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, many residents of the Downtown Eastside viewed this abandoned city space as negative symbolic capital. About five years ago, the Vancity Community Foundation made a proposal to redevelop 312 Main and entered into a 30-year management agreement with the City of Vancouver. In partnership with the VanCity Credit Union and the Jim Green Foundation, we are collectively reimagining what it truly means to “serve and protect” in the Downtown Eastside.

The design process for 312 Main involved extensive consultation with more than 300 local residents, companies, community groups, co-working experts, indigenous organizations, service providers, municipal staff, and programming partners. What resulted was a co-created model of community and co-working space, a cultural hub intended to serve the needs of an extremely diverse population.

The most common request we received was for affordable, accessible workspace and community gathering space within a challenging Vancouver real estate market. The most frequently requested amenity was for publicly accessible, gender-neutral washrooms. By committing to affordable rates, by building an accessible entrance, and by providing public washrooms on the main floor, we began to see a shift in our community. They weren't used to being heard so clearly and being involved so directly in the creation process. We took that as a sign to continue inviting everyone to the planning table. Collectively, we have designed a building meant to service all, and we are modelling democratic engagement, reconciliation, and inclusivity in everything we do at 312 Main.

For those who have not yet had the experience of visiting our site under construction, I'll describe the facilities we're renovating and creating for artists, entrepreneurs, residents, social enterprises, and small businesses.

On our main floor we're developing approximately 18,000 square feet of community space, including the public washrooms, meeting rooms, training rooms, and gallery and event spaces. The main gathering space features a longhouse-inspired design to welcome all members and guests to participate and to feel comfortable at 312 Main.

The space is designed to be porous and inclusive. It's our goal to make it a flexible space used by members, residents, children, and elders, and to provide low-barrier employment opportunities. Our main floor community house team is working with the trauma-informed security team, local nurse practitioners, tech support services, and a circle of grandmothers to ensure that the space remains accessible, safe, and welcoming for all.

The main floor also houses *Megaphone* magazine, supporting street vendors who are often struggling with issues of poverty and homelessness, as well as our cafe run by East Van Roasters, a local social enterprise supporting women in transition who are re-entering the workforce.

The gallery and multiple event spaces can accommodate a full range of community events, including our significant commitment to local arts and cultural programming. In our first year alone, we're planning to host art exhibitions, market drumming circles, indigenous language classes, professional workshops and seminars, community support groups, training sessions, live music and theatre presentations, and choir practices. We're partnering with groups such as the Saint James Music Academy to ensure a space for musical instruction for the neighbourhood children. We're also committed to providing a community programming fund to ensure that all organizations can access the facilities at a subsidized rate or free of charge, if required.

Our basement level is being renovated to provide affordable production facilities, artist work studios, and maker spaces. This collaborative workspace also includes an exhibition space, a podcasting room, a local radio station, a tool library, and access to shared equipment and resources for our members.

The second and third floors of 312 Main are dedicated to more traditional co-working space. For those unfamiliar, a co-working space is a shared workspace or office where many independent organizations or individuals are co-located, each working on their own companies, projects, or initiatives, but sharing the space, equipment, resources, staff, and technology.

When we talk about co-working at 312 Main, I really must clarify that we're referring to the co-working movement rather than the recent phenomenon of the co-working industry. Lately the industry has received a lot of attention as many have discovered that the co-working model can provide a stable and significant revenue stream. However, in addition to this, we recognize that a genuine co-working model is truly about the benefits of collaboration and a collective mindset. We understand co-working to be an action as well as a model.

● (0945)

As one of the founders of the co-working movement, after successfully building and managing co-working spaces for artists and entrepreneurs in Toronto and Seattle for the past 15 years, and after visiting more than 500 co-working spaces around the world, I would consider myself to be an expert on the subject. It's become my life's work to share the benefits of the co-working models we're discovering, developing, and empowering in entrepreneurial, creative, and cultural hubs across Canada.

Please let me be clear: we are not simply renting desks and providing members with WiFi and coffee. It's not about the office space itself; it's about what happens when we work together. A genuine co-working space is built intentionally; it's curated and managed to encourage community engagement, to accelerate serendipity. The staff are dedicated to serving members while animating and cultivating the community itself. Above all else, we value collaboration over competition.

In a genuine co-working space, we're making entrepreneurship accessible. We're breaking down barriers and building bridges between communities and industries. We're inspiring and empowering our members. We are sharing best practices and expanding our networks. We are bringing people together, and we are dismantling loneliness. We are building and strengthening our communities. We are accelerating economic development. We are protecting freelancer rights. We are increasing productivity and the capacity of all of our member organizations. We are ensuring the sustainability of social enterprises and small businesses. We are modelling reconciliation, diversity, and inclusivity. Collectively, we're shaping the future of work.

Our co-working members at 312 Main are intentionally diverse. We provide offices and desks for social enterprises, small businesses, arts collectives, independent workers, creative professionals, freelancers, and established entrepreneurs. Our diversity truly is our strength, as we all have unique experiences and knowledge to share around the water cooler. Our fourth, fifth, and sixth floors offer co-located space for larger and more established organizations. These groups maintain private office space while sharing common meeting and event facilities.

The fourth floor is also going to become home to our indigenous healing and wellness centre. This is not a traditional clinic; there are no western practices, but rather, it's a space for indigenous healing practices, and it's led by a collective of indigenous service providers and elders. We are building a quiet space for meditation as well, and a rooftop garden to provide community access to green space and the plants and herbs required for the indigenous healing practices.

We are about to open phase one to the public—the basement, main, and second floor—in June 2018. The third and fourth floors are projected to open in September of this year. Floors five and six and the rooftop garden are projected to open in January of 2019. As I'm sure you can imagine, renovations of this scale are extensive and expensive when converting a shooting range, a 911 call centre, and jail cells into a welcoming, healing space. To date, we are fortunate to have received financial support from VanCity, the Vancity Community Foundation, the Jim Green Foundation, the City of Vancouver, the R. Howard Webster Foundation, and the Department of Canadian Heritage. 312 Main has received two significant contributions from the Canada cultural spaces fund, and we are extremely grateful for that support. On behalf of our entire team and our future members, I sincerely thank you for that.

The financial support we have received to date has been dedicated to covering capital costs, and we are still working to secure funding for the final phases of construction, including replacing jail cell windows on the upper floors and building the indigenous healing and wellness centre and the rooftop garden. We are asking for your continued support and the support of your colleagues as we work to transform this negative symbolic capital into a positive community asset by serving the public need for this valuable arts and cultural infrastructure. With your help, we hope to educate others about the measurable social and economic impacts of creative collaboration through community-engaged co-working. We need support at both the provincial and federal level to ensure contribution from the infrastructure fund to complete the work at 312 Main.

Our working spaces and cultural hubs are easily accessible points of contact with engaged citizens, local businesses, and community leaders. These collaborative models are helping members in communities around the world to thrive, and Canadians are leaders in this field. I encourage you all to continue to support collaborative cross-disciplined partnerships and initiatives that strengthen diverse communities like ours with multiple needs and interests.

I'd like to welcome anyone who'd like to learn more about 312 Main, or co-working in general, to come and visit us in Vancouver and to tour the site under construction.

Thank you, again, for inviting me to participate.

● (0950)

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll move down the table to representatives from Qaggiavuut, please.

Mr. Vincent Karetak (Chairperson, Qaggiavuut): [*Witness speaks in Inuktitut*]

Thank you, first of all, for allowing us to speak here today.

Qaggiq is a Nunavut performing arts and Inuit cultural learning hub that we're targeting for 2019. *Qaggiq* is a traditional Inuit term to describe a magnificent igloo where Inuit gather to strengthen culture and celebrate life in song and story. *Qaggiavuut* is a traditional Inuit term to call people to come into the *qaggiq* that we have built together.

Qaggiavuut is a non-profit society that was founded in 2008. It works to build wellness, culture, and Inuit language in Nunavut by supporting Inuit performing artists with training and opportunities. Qaggiavuut is a winner of the Arctic Inspiration Prize for its *qaggiq* strategy to train Nunavut performing artists and deliver performing arts programs to youth.

Since 2016, we have supported over 300 Inuit performing artists and delivered Inuit arts programming to over 5,000 Nunavut children and youth. We assist artists to create new work in contemporary music, theatre, dance, film, and new media, and maintain traditional Inuit performing arts. Stories and songs are a connection to history and are the key to strengthening a culture and language at risk. Many Inuit performing arts were lost during the past century through colonization. Keeping them vibrant and alive today builds a sense of belonging among youth. Qaggiavuut is

governed by volunteers and raises funding to deliver Inuit performing arts programming in Nunavut.

Qaggiavuut has advocated for an Inuit performing arts space for a decade. Last year, on Canada Day, we began a campaign to lobby governments, fundraise, consult, and plan for Qaggiq, an Inuit performing arts and cultural learning hub.

Cultural hubs are a great way to focus resources and bring together different disciplines in order to strengthen the creative sector. Qaggiavuut is interested in the way that a hub can build the Inuit language and culture through the performing arts and the technical and management fields of the arts. We believe there are three key pillars for a creative hub in Nunavut, where the vast majority of artists are Inuit, and over 80% of the people are Inuit.

A Nunavut creative hub must, one, involve Inuit artists in all aspects and be focused on meeting the needs of the artists. Two, it must promote and strengthen Inuit language and culture through training and presentation. Three, it must provide interdisciplinary collaboration between artists and the technical and management fields of the performing arts and other sectors, including businesses, visual and media arts, elders, and educators.

● (0955)

Ms. Ellen Hamilton (Executive Director, Qaggiavuut): Hi. I'm Ellen, from Qaggiavuut. That was Vinnie. Vinnie is our chairperson, by the way.

I just want to note that we have not built Qaggiq yet; we are advocating for it.

This traditional Inuit term, I think, really encapsulates what you're all talking about here, a hub, a place where people come from different places and gather and celebrate life through story and song, which is our history. We pass on language through music and stories. That's what we do as human beings, and in Nunavut we don't have a space for performing artists right now.

We envision Qaggiq as a hub for Inuit culture, not only in Inuit Nunangat, but in Canada and the circumpolar world, providing training and opportunities to artists, education to youth, and a professional space to present the Inuit performing arts. The aims of Qaggiq complement the work of governments, as governments seek to strengthen and recognize Inuit culture and address issues of community stability, particularly and importantly among our youth.

Qaggiq is an exciting opportunity to launch a performing arts industry in Nunavut and provide higher education in the performing arts, including the cultural, visual, and technical fields of the arts—lighting and sound, recording, and digital design. The most effective way of strengthening language is through the performing arts. Qaggiq would be a hub that encourages Inuit artists to collaborate with each other, strengthen their skills, and connect people to culture and language through the arts.

Our dream for Qaggiq is to strengthen Nunavut performing artists ultimately. We want artists from across Nunavut to come to this hub and receive training and presentation opportunities to build their skills, create new work, promote their careers, and secure employment.

On youth programming, research indicates that the performing arts are the most impactful method of providing youth at risk with a sense of belonging. Qaggiq would deliver Inuit performing arts education and training to our children and youth. Perhaps they would travel to the hub to learn Inuit performing arts through music and drum dancing and storytelling, the way we send kids right now to Iqaluit to play hockey and badminton.

On suicide and risk prevention. “Breaking Point”, the recent report from the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs, makes direct links between the development of indigenous language, arts training, and suicide prevention. The committee recommends community control over the arts, cultural infrastructure, and the teaching of indigenous languages to youth. Our Qaggiq would provide all three of these elements.

According to studies by Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, mental health issues are the highest priority for Inuit. Factors contributing to mental health issues include the loss of culture and the lack of recognition. Research is showing us that participating in the performing arts all around the world improves mental health and well-being. Qaggiq would be a hub of creativity, inspiration, and expression.

Qaggiq would strengthen Inuit culture and language by training Inuit artists and allowing them to deliver the Inuit arts programming to our Nunavut children and youth. This is a huge issue right now in Nunavut, where most of our Nunavut children go through school seldom having an Inuit teacher and education in their language.

Mentorship and training positions for Inuit are built into our project, from constructing the building to running the lights and sound.

On post-secondary and higher learning, we would like to have a space where we can actually get to that higher level of learning through language.

Now I'd like to pass it on to Laakkuluk.

• (1000)

Ms. Laakkuluk Williamson Bathory (Artistic Director, Qaggiq): I just want to emphasize that we are creating something that has not existed yet. It's wonderful to hear about projects all across the country that are able to regenerate buildings, as we have just heard. We have nothing, and so we're doing what we do in small living rooms and in garages across Nunavut in the Arctic.

As an inter-sector cultural hub, Qaggiq provides the physical space needed by performing artists to create other compatible uses, including much-needed visual arts gallery space and a theatre to screen Inuit, Nunavut, and circumpolar films. Qaggiq features a teaching kitchen for the Inuit culinary arts, and an atrium, which is an indoor market, for our country food—seal meats, caribou meat, and so on—and for artisans and cultural skills teaching, including skin sewing and hunting tool construction. Broadcasting to Nunavut

communities, Qaggiq provides advanced digital streaming capacity and live broadcasts of performances and master classes to Arctic communities in the world. In a digital age, it is vital that Internet providers support the delivery of Inuit content to stave off the onslaught of mostly English-dominated environments. We need to be able to hear our language in order to use our language.

On interdisciplinary collaboration, there are many disciplines within the performing arts umbrella, including contemporary and traditional Inuit music, theatre, dance, acrobatics, film, and new media. Qaggiq provides opportunities to bring artists from various performing arts and media arts together to collaborate, including Nunavummiut interested in learning and working in the technical fields of the arts—lighting, sound, recording, video editing, camera, digital design and projection—as well as in the fields of art management, stage management, set design, construction, costume and makeup design, directing, writing, and producing.

In the area of tourism, Qaggiq will be Canada's first performing arts space for Inuit, providing a destination for Inuit and cultural tourists. Qaggiq is a physical space for cultural exchange between artists, the community, and visitors.

On economic impact and cultural exports, Qaggiq will allow Nunavut to become a unique international cultural centre while contributing significantly to the \$54.6 billion arts industry by creating high-value jobs. Qaggiq creates economic opportunities for artists and arts sector technicians and managers.

The hub model is at its most effective when there's an intersection among hubs, including partnerships, collaborations, and cross-cultural alliances. When hubs strengthen their sector, they are better able to share knowledge with other sectors, including other hubs in the cultural sector, such as heritage, visual arts, film and new media, and non-artistic sectors, such as business, government, environment, social justice, and technology. Qaggiq will strengthen the abilities of Inuit performing artists and technicians to work and collaborate in other sectors.

The rationale for an Inuit performing arts hub is that the people of Nunavut are the only people in Canada without a performing arts space. Without space, Inuit performing artists cannot collaborate, create, learn, teach, and present. By strengthening performing artists with an interdisciplinary hub dedicated to their needs, artists can build culture and language and strong partnerships with other sectors in Canadian society.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We will now continue down the table to Méduse, Caroline Salaün and Claude Bélanger.

[Translation]

Mrs. Caroline Salaün (General Manager, Méduse): Good morning.

First of all, I would like to thank the committee for inviting us and giving us the opportunity to share our expertise with you.

For this presentation, I am joined by Claude Bélanger, who is the general manager of Manif d'art, the Quebec City Biennial, and vice-president of our board of directors. I must also point out that Mr. Bélanger was the general manager of Oeil de poisson, one of the founding members of Méduse. So he will be able to answer any questions you may have about establishing a cultural centre.

We are going to use the time that you have given us to briefly present to you our cultural centre and to draw your attention to some of the remarks in the brief we submitted on March 24. We are also going to focus on some aspects that were not in our brief that may complete the picture for you, and thereby give you more food for thought.

We would like to start by showing you a short introductory video on Méduse.

[*Audiovisual presentation*]

Thank you—

•(1005)

The Chair: Can I ask you to hang on for a moment? There is something I have to say.

There is a 30-minute bell. Can I have unanimous consent for the witnesses to finish their presentation?

Then I will be asking the witnesses to give their presentation quickly. But first I have to ask whether that is acceptable to all members of the committee.

[*English*]

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: All right.

[*Translation*]

Thank you.

So I am going to ask you to shorten your presentation a little, because we have to rush off to vote.

Mrs. Caroline Salaün: No problem.

Now that we have shown you the facility, we are going to quickly talk about Méduse's foundation and operations.

I will hand you over to Mr. Bélanger.

Mr. Claude Bélanger (General Manager, Manif d'art, Méduse): The Coopérative Méduse was born in 1993 from the collective will of a number of contemporary arts organizations, the will to acquire a building together in order to improve the precarious conditions of artistic endeavour. I should mention that the project began in 1989 at an event that brought several of the founding members of Méduse together to celebrate the 150th anniversary of photography.

The building was opened in 1995. Choosing its legal status was not easy, but the cooperative model won the day; it has allowed each organization to have a voice. To be members of Méduse, artistic, cultural or community organizations must participate in the life of the cooperative and operate in accordance with its mandates. The fundamental idea is to provide contemporary arts professionals with

expertise, service and equipment of various kinds under the same roof.

Most organizations provide support for research, production and outreach. As we have seen, this can be printmaking, photography, video, wood, metal, sound, computers, or multidisciplinary art. Others specialize in a specific field. That is the case with my organization, Manif d'art, which focuses on promotion.

Besides managing the facility, the cooperative's objective is to provide local, national and international showcases. As well as being able to work on site, artists can have residencies in one of the cooperative's five studios for short or medium stays or in order to show their work there. Our two performance spaces are open to the public and used for all forms of art, music, theatre, dance, contemporary art or cinema, in annual, high-quality programming. The spaces have been managed for a number of years by one of the member organizations of the cooperative. Our galleries are seven in number and are used for annual programming in all aspects of contemporary art. As we have seen, that includes photography, installations and video, to name but a few. In total, the cooperative's activities involve almost 100,000 people. The video that we showed you is a few years old: today, 100,000 people come to visit us each year, which makes us very proud.

All member organizations of Méduse are recognized and supported by different levels of government because of the quality of their offerings. However, no matter the quality of the cultural offerings, the financial realities of member organizations have to be considered, if we want to develop the infrastructure and increase its impact.

That development cannot rely on private funding, which is difficult to obtain and especially to maintain. In Quebec City, for example, the number of residents and of resident companies is limited and competition is fierce. Most of the funding from private companies goes to performing arts institutions or to very popular events like the Festival d'été de Québec, or the Quebec Winter Carnival, and is a function of their marketing strategies, which really means the good will of the management of the day.

Let me emphasize that our reputation is built on our ability to work together and with others. For the members of Méduse, working together for mutual benefit is in our DNA. In fact, consistent with the multidisciplinary mandates and needs of the artists, partnerships are regularly established with private, educational and community sectors.

As a member of Méduse, but also as an administrator and an artist, the only way I can conclude is by saying that our centre provides both our artists and Quebec City with a high-quality cultural infrastructure. Méduse has allowed artists to bring their work to life, while staying in Quebec City. Examples are BGL, which has participated in the Venice Biennale, Diane Landry, who has an international career, and Giorgia Volpe. Méduse has also given birth to two international events: the Mois Multi, in multidisciplinary art, and Manif d'art, the Quebec City Biennale, which I represent and which is generating significant attention. Finally, the annual artistic residency exchange agreements with Europe point to Méduse's cooperation internationally.

We look forward to taking the next step.

I will now give the floor back to our general manager.

● (1010)

Mrs. Caroline Salaün: As Mr. Bélanger said earlier, the members of Méduse are extremely dynamic and involved. They also all have a voice on the board of directors and they invest their time in setting the cooperative's direction. Just recently, the members, the board of directors and I put the final touches on a strategic planning process that took more than a year and established a new mission and a new vision for the cooperative.

For everyone, Méduse is clearly a model and it must remain one, but, to do so, the hyperstructure must be allowed to develop in order to grow. So the vision is clear, the needs are defined, and the projects are major but realistic. Funding, however, is inadequate. Even if the cooperative managed to operate at 80% because of its own funds, it faces significant financial challenges mainly related—and I really have to stress this—to maintaining and renovating the building, and to keeping it attractive and visible. Without a long-term, 20-year lease from the Ville de Québec, a municipal tax exemption, and support from its tenants, the centre cannot be financially viable.

The precarious financial situation of some of the tenants and our solidarity as a cooperative is driving us quickly to think about other avenues so that we can keep our members' rent affordable, while providing them with a stimulating and suitable place in which their expertise can be displayed.

In the brief we have submitted, we show that timelines for implementing asset-maintenance projects are longer than five years, according to the parameters of government programs. I am referring to the Programme d'aide aux immobilisations in Quebec and to the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund.

Our first, our main recommendation would therefore be to provide cultural centres with on-going financial assistance annually in order to make up for this long wait and to prevent the infrastructure from deteriorating. If I use Méduse as an example, with its current funding request of \$2 million, which is awaiting confirmation by Canadian Heritage, it would be better for us if we could receive annual funding, rather than a one-time grant once every five or 10 years. It would mean that maintaining our assets would be more proactive and possibly less expensive, while providing ongoing cultural offerings and permanent outreach. The return on that federal government investment could not be more beneficial, or the national and international impact more robust.

Our second recommendation is related to the first: it is to create a designation of "Canadian cultural centre" in order to provide the country with a strong network for creating and showcasing arts and culture. In our brief, we refer to the French model of contemporary arts centres. By creating a designation of this kind—

● (1015)

The Chair: I am sorry, but I really have to interrupt you here. The 10 minutes for your presentation are now over, and we have to hurry and vote.

Mrs. Caroline Salaün: Great.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

[English]

Thank you to all of you for submitting your materials.

I'm very sorry, but we have to run to vote, so that's going to be the end of this meeting.

The meeting is adjourned.

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