

CANADIAN NETWORK FOR IMAGINATION AND CREATIVITY

ANNUAL REPORT

2020 – 21

“Imagination and creativity are foundational for us all as they form the basis of how we learn, enrich our lives, develop new ideas and meet life’s challenges”.

The above is the opening salutation of the CNIC web-site. The idea of a national network for Canadian energy, dedication and vision for all aspects of the creative process, was originally born in the mind of Dr. Mary Blatherwick, the founding chair of the Atlantic Centre for Creativity (ACC). Her leadership and embrace of colleagues from so many aspects of life, in the Atlantic provinces of Canada, resulted in stunning mutual conversations, discoveries and enrichment, across many disciplines and enterprises, leading to discoveries unlikely with singular research and activity. In 2018, in his observation of the extraordinary exchange provided by so many voices meeting together revealed through ACC, Michael Wilson suggested and encouraged Mary to go ‘nation-wide’ with a similar approach, mandate and vision. With other founding Steering Committee members Gillian Judson, Peter Gamwell, Alexis Milligan, Jessica Sokolowsky, Sandeep Glover, Mingyu-Lin, Stan Baines, Jackie Lawrence and Robin Jenson, in original representation of the Atlantic Centre for Creativity, the University of Ottawa and Simon Fraser University, a national, mostly on-line, network was launched in September of 2020 “ to unleash and promote imagination and creativity across all fields of endeavour – including the arts, sciences, business and education”. Although launched initially as a Canadian platform, it has since welcomed participants from the US, the UK, Australia, Argentina and New Zealand.

As the launch of CNIC coincided with the tragic passing of Sir Ken Robinson, one of our most significant, inspiring gurus, our web-site contains a deeply touching tribute from Peter Gamwell, one of Sir Ken’s friends, sharing a bond of a common birthplace and passion for British football.

CNIC is very expansive in its interpretation of creativity. We embrace all elements of perceptual acuity, play, imagination, the creative process and innovation. We provided 2 main elements in our first year of existence: 1) platforms for sharing among as wide a circle as we could reach 2) creating occasions for relaxed, intimate, storytelling and dialogue, known as ‘Idea Jams’. In the past year we held 8 of them, each third Thursday of the month, from 7 – 8pm (EST), on the following topics:

1. ***Play – an essential beginning root.*** Hosted by Michael Wilson and Jessica Sokolowsky
2. ***Challenging the One Right Answer.*** Hosted by Mary Blatherwick and Alexis Milligan
3. ***Exploring how the Story-Form Shapes our Professional Lives.***
Hosted by Gillian Judson
4. ***Re-imagining Cultures of Learning in an Age of Complexity.*** Hosted by Peter Gamwell, Stan Baines and Jacqueline Lawrence.
5. ***Exploring the Inter-relationships among Diversity, Equity and Creativity.*** Hosted by Sandeep Kaur Glover
6. ***Reflecting on the Past and Imagineering the Future: A Tribute to Sir Ken Robinson.*** Hosted by Peter Gamwell and Gillian Judson in partnership with ‘Imagine If’ Festival.
7. ***Play, ‘Free’, Improvisation.*** Hosted by Mingyu Lin.

8. **Making Change.** Hosted by Robin Jenson, featuring Wendie Wilson

The following represents the Steering Committee assessments of accomplishments, suggestions for better representation and exchange, of the first year of birth and life.

The Steering Committee had articulated 3 specific goals for our first year:

- 1) To promote research and programming in all elements of imagination and creativity.
- 2) To create opportunities for sharing our stories, thoughts and ideas, across all disciplines.
- 3) To form collaborations and partnerships with all others who have interests and passions about imagination and creativity.

Goals 1 and 3 have been well launched toward goal attainment through our ongoing e-mail newsletter and regular additions to our web-site under events and projects. A spectacular achievement included being part of the World Creativity and Innovation week (April 15 – 21, 2021), facilitated in large part by the Canadian Ambassador to the WCIW, Goran Matic (our newest Board member). We plan to permanently continue this immensely valuable connection with ‘creatives’ world-wide. Goal 2 was the driver of our Idea Jam sessions. Here, we seemed to have unearthed deep interest by many to engage in relaxed conversations, to tell stories and to learn from each other in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. So far, this feature has remained the unique feature of CNIC. In general, we still need to enhance our total effect by: a greater effort to reach participants from all walks of life; a more focused and acknowledgement and sense of inclusion and a greater consistent attempt to intensify the importance of our coming together, encouraging others to feel comfortable in speaking their minds.

Vision for 2021-22:

We intend to continue our Idea Jam sessions on a monthly basis beginning in September, 2021. We also intend to launch a blog series based on interviews of selected seminal creatives from around Canada and from the wider world.

We intend to grow the breadth and depth of the web-site by reaching new participants on a regular basis and by widening resources, partners and visions as they arise anywhere. We intend to widen and make more effective our presence on several social platforms including Facebook, Twitter and others.

Vision – Long Term:

CNIC will strive to be a significant Canadian platform encompassing all spectrums of the creative process, reflecting all aspects of Canadian society. In this way, we will select topics of conversation that are of concern to everyone, from construction workers to the Academy; from teachers to automobile mechanics; from scientists to retail employees; from farmers to artists; from taxi drivers to radio announcers; from jockeys to sanitary engineers. We will seek to reveal voices from all diverse elements of Canadian society.

In pursuit of the above, we also seek to reveal Canadians to the creative world and to provide a window on that world to Canadians. With appropriate financial and human resources, we will consider sponsoring national live and on-line national conferences, symposia and other significant events.