



**Canada Council  
for the Arts**

**Conseil des Arts  
du Canada**

**Comparisons of Arts Funding in Selected Countries:  
Preliminary Findings**

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## Introduction

This report is intended to provide some indication of where Canada might stand now compared with other countries in relation to arts funding, in particular at the national level. It has been prepared to support the case that additional arts funding is needed in Canada in order for Canadian arts organizations and artists to thrive and to function on the same level as their peers in other countries.

Studies that use data up to a decade old (Arts Council of England 1998, Department of Canadian Heritage 2000, National Endowment for the Arts 2000, The Arts Council of Ireland 2000), as well as recent anecdotal evidence, suggest that compared to a number of countries Canada provides relatively low levels of funding for the arts or at least stands just below the middle in terms of ranking. These studies have typically focused on arts and museums spending by all levels of government in Australia, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, Sweden, UK and the United States. All of these studies have used similar or the same data, providing updates or additional figures and expressing the data in different currencies.

The original Arts Council of England 1998 report which compiled figures on public arts and museum spending using data for 1993, 1994 or 1995, placed Canada just below the middle, regardless of which measure was used:

**Table 1: Direct Public Expenditures on Arts and Museums, Selected Countries**

	Per capita public arts spending	Public arts spending as % of GDP	Public arts spending as % of total public spending
Finland	£59.2	0.47%	2.10%
Germany	£56.5	0.36%	1.79%
France	£37.8	0.26%	1.31%
Sweden	£37.5	0.29%	1.02%
Netherlands	£30.3	0.21%	1.47%
Canada	£29.9	0.21%	0.93%
UK	£16.6	0.14%	0.65%
Australia	£16.4	0.14%	0.82%
Ireland	£5.6	0.07%	0.43%
US	£3.8	0.02%	0.13%

Source: Arts Council of England, Policy Research and Planning Department, Research Report Number 13, *International Data on Public Spending on the Arts in Eleven Countries*, March 1998

The subsequent studies from the Department of Canadian Heritage, National Endowment for the Arts and the Irish Arts Council drew heavily on the original ACE study. The latest – the Irish Arts Council - did not include Canada in its comparative data.

The main indicators used to compare arts funding between countries in the studies have been:

- per capita arts funding figures
- arts spending by national governments as a percentage of GDP
- arts spending by national governments as a % of all government spending
- comparative income sources of arts organizations (public, private and earned revenues)

The problems with undertaking international comparisons of arts funding are numerous and have been well documented in a working paper prepared by the Australia Council with the International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies (IFACCA) (Australia Council and IFACCA, 2004). Key problems include: definitions of the arts varying between countries; not taking account of both direct and indirect sources of arts funding; and the fact that exchange rate conversions do not take account of real differences in cost of living between countries.

In line with the cautions noted in the Australia Council/IFACCA report, the author of this report reiterates that direct comparisons between countries should not be made only on a simple basis such as comparing per capita arts funding figures. This report does, however, include some per capita arts council funding figures. This is just a starting point for analysis. In addition to the per capita figures, there are descriptions for each country detailing some information on overall culture funding. These are intended to try to give some sense of what the per capita arts council funding figures do not take account of. There are also some sectoral comparisons of arts funding, particularly funding to performing arts.

Figures and descriptive material included in this report should be considered as preliminary and subject to further review and adjustment. The following description from Prof. Mark Schuster, who undertook the seminal comparative international arts funding study in 1985, makes clear the danger of only using per capita arts funding figures:

*“Suppose that every country has an identical policy to support one national opera, one national orchestra, one national art museum, one national dance company, etc. and suppose that these cost more or less the same across countries. The result is that countries with smaller populations will have higher per capita expenditures because of their difference in size, not their difference in policy!”*

Undertaking a comprehensive international comparison of arts funding would require much more extensive research than the very cursory analysis in this report. It is hoped that this preliminary report will lead to continued careful research on the same topic in the future.

## **Preliminary Findings**

This report includes some limited comparisons of arts council funding and government arts funding across 20 countries including Canada.

### **a) Arts Funding by Arts Councils**

Table 2(a) includes the per capita arts council funding figures for each country, with an attempt made to group arts councils according to whether they are similar in mandate and structure to the Canada Council for the Arts or not. Table 1(b) includes information about culture funding in each of the countries.

Figures are typically for 2003-2004 fiscal years unless otherwise indicated. All figures are in Canadian dollars except where indicated. Descriptive information about arts and culture funding for each country is taken from recent publications or web-based information from arts councils, culture ministries or international research agencies undertaking work on the arts and culture such as ERICArts – the European Institute for Comparative Cultural Research. All references are detailed at the end of the report.

#### **1. Countries with Arts Councils Similar to Canada Council for the Arts (8 arts councils):**

Table 2(a) details per capita funding figures for arts councils with a mandate and structure similar to Canada Council for the Arts – arm's length arts councils providing grants to a range of art forms. With the exception of the National Endowment for the Arts in the US, all of these arts councils provide a much higher level of funding on a per capita basis than the Canada Council for the Arts.

Arts Council England provides over \$24 per capita, compared with \$22 per capita for the Scottish Arts Council, \$19 for Creative Wales and \$18 for the Irish Arts Council. It should be noted that in the case of England, Scotland and Wales, lottery funding for the arts awarded through the arts councils is included together with regular government funding. Lottery funding is particularly significant in the case of Arts Council England, where £326 million of income is so-called grant-in-aid (government funding to ACE through the Department for Culture, Media and Sport), while £154 million represents revenues from the National Lottery Distribution Fund.

While Canada stands closer to Australia and New Zealand in per capita terms (\$4.73 for Canada Council for the Arts compared with \$6.91 for the Australia Council and \$7.01 for Creative New Zealand), the Canadian figure is still at only about 2/3 of the levels in the latter two countries.

Only the United States stands below Canada, and it is very significantly below. Per capita funding through the NEA represents only about one-tenth of per capita funding through Canada Council for the Arts. It should be noted that almost one-third of NEA funding is for state and regional partnership agreements.

## 2. Countries with Arts Councils Dissimilar to Canada Council for the Arts (7 arts councils)

Although arts councils with a mandate and structure which is dissimilar to the Canada Council cannot really be compared in terms of per capita funding, it is nevertheless useful to look at funding levels in these countries in the context of the different frameworks for arts funding. If anything, this exercise also serves to highlight the dangers of simple per capita arts funding comparisons, as well as the fact that comparisons of arts funding are complex.

The National Arts Council of Singapore is a case in point. This arts council has a very close relationship with the Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts and is not arm's length in the sense that the arts council does not have the final say on all grant decisions. In addition, this arts council owns and manages venues as an integral part of its operations, as well as running a festival and operating a housing scheme for artists' studio space. The grants portion of its activities is relatively small. This is why the overall budget per capita (\$7.29) is almost twice the figure for arts funding (grants) per capita (\$3.83).

**Table 2(a)**  
**ARTS COUNCIL COMPARISONS**  
**ARTS GRANTS AND TOTAL REVENUES**  
**2003-2004 (unless otherwise indicated)**

	Total Arts Grants per capita in Can\$	Total Budgets* per capita in Can\$	Data Year
<b>COUNTRIES WITH ARTS COUNCILS WITH A SIMILAR MANDATE TO CANADA COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS</b>			
<b>ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND</b>	\$22.99	\$24.36	2003-2004
<b>SCOTTISH ARTS COUNCIL</b>	\$20.00	\$22.37	2003-2004
<b>CREATIVE WALES (ARTS COUNCIL OF WALES)</b>	\$17.46	\$19.46	2003-2004
<b>THE ARTS COUNCIL (IRELAND)</b>	\$16.28	\$17.91	2003
<b>ARTS COUNCIL OF NORTHERN IRELAND - NATIONAL LOTTERY FUND</b>	\$13.62	..	2003-2004
<b>AUSTRALIA COUNCIL</b>	\$6.19	\$6.91	2003-2004
<b>CREATIVE NEW ZEALAND</b>	\$5.64	\$7.01	2003-2004
<b>CANADA COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS</b>	<b>\$4.15</b>	<b>\$4.73</b>	2003-2004
<b>NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS (US)</b>	\$0.44	\$0.51	2003

Figures are preliminary and are subject to further revision.

Notes:

(1) Detailed spreadsheets are available which contain currency conversion calculations and population figures used for per capita arts funding figures. Note that the date selected for all currency conversion was last day of the fiscal year used by each arts council (i.e. if the fiscal year is April 1, 2003 to March 31, 2004, the date used for currency conversion was March 31, 2004).

**Table 2(a) (cont'd)**  
**ARTS COUNCIL COMPARISONS**  
**ARTS GRANTS AND TOTAL REVENUES**  
**2003-2004 (unless otherwise indicated)**

<b>OTHER COUNTRIES WITH ARTS COUNCILS</b>			
<b>STATENS KULTURRAD (SWEDISH NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR CULTURAL AFFAIRS)</b>	\$28.38	..	2004
<b>KUNSTRADDET AND KUNSTSTYRELSEN (DANISH ARTS FOUNDATION AND THE DANISH ARTS COUNCIL)</b>	\$19.39	..	2003
<b>NORSK KULTURRAD (ARTS COUNCIL NORWAY)</b>	..	\$10.97	2004
<b>NATIONAL ARTS COUNCIL (SINGAPORE)</b>	\$3.83	\$7.29	2003-2004
<b>PRO HELVETICA (ARTS COUNCIL SWITZERLAND)</b>	\$2.97	\$4.45	2005 (budget figures)
<b>ARTS COUNCIL OF FINLAND</b>	n.a. see description in Table 2(b)	n.a. see description in Table 2(b)	
<b>RAAD VOOR KULTUR (COUNCIL FOR CULTURE) (NETHERLANDS)</b>	n.a. – see description below in Table 2(b)	n.a. – see description below in Table 2(b)	n.a.

Figures are preliminary and are subject to further revision.

Notes:

(1) Detailed spreadsheets are available which contain currency conversion calculations and population figures used for per capita arts funding figures. Note that the date selected for all currency conversion was last day of the fiscal year used by each arts council (i.e. if the fiscal year is April 1, 2003 to March 31, 2004, the date used for currency conversion was March 31, 2004).

## **b) Culture Funding by Country**

Table 2(b) below provides some preliminary data on culture funding (including arts funding) by governments in each of 20 countries. In many cases, it is difficult to locate arts funding figures specifically. Culture funding figures are used in most cases, except where arts comparisons can be made.

The most striking thing about these figures is not how poorly Canada compares with countries such as France and Germany in terms of culture funding by government. The figures stand at CAN\$7.3 billion for Canada vs. CAN\$10 billion for France and CAN\$13 billion for Germany. France and Germany both have much larger populations than Canada (33 million for Canada vs. 61 million for France and 82 million for Germany) and much longer traditions of supporting arts and culture.

The thing that is much more striking is how Canada and even some of the larger population countries compare with countries with small populations. For example, Ireland with a population of 4 million has an arts council with a budget of CAN\$72 million. Scotland has a population of 5 million and its arts council has a budget of CAN\$114 million. Denmark with a population of 5.4 million provides arts funding through its arts council and arts foundation of CAN\$150 million. Wales has a population of 2.9 million and an arts council budget of CAN\$56 million.

**Table 2(b)**  
**OVERALL CULTURE FUNDING IN EACH COUNTRY**

	<b>Direct Culture and Arts Funding At the Federal or National Level</b>	<b>Other Levels of Government</b>
<b>CANADA</b> (population approx. 33 million)	The Department of Canadian Heritage is responsible for public funding of culture in Canada at the federal level. Total spending on culture by governments at all levels stood at CAN\$7.3 billion, of which \$3.4 billion was from the federal government. 7% of the federal government's spending on culture (approx. CAN\$243 million) went to the arts.	Provincial and municipal arts councils and culture departments provide a significant amount of arts funding, particularly in Québec. Provincial governments spent \$283 million on the arts, while municipal governments spent \$24 million.
<b>AUSTRALIA</b> (population approx. 20 million)	Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts is the national government department responsible for the arts. This department supports the arts in Australia through a number of programs covering areas such as its Art bank, arts training bodies, music touring, festivals, Public Lending Rights. In 2002-2003, total government funding of arts and heritage was AUS\$4.9 billion (approx CAN\$4.6 billion). Of this national government arts and heritage funding represented AUS\$1.7 billion (approx CAN\$1.5 billion) The Australia Council's budget in 2003-2004 was AUS\$147.5 million (approx. CAN\$137 million)	The states in Australia each have an arts council. The national government accounts for 35% of arts funding(a), state and territory governments provide 60%, with the bulk coming from the state and territory governments.
<b>ENGLAND</b> (population approx. 49 million)	The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) is the government department responsible for the arts. The DCMS does not fund the arts directly but rather through Arts Council England. Arts Council England is now merged with 10 Regional Arts Boards to form one organization responsible for both the distribution of government funding and National Lottery Funding. The ACE's total budget in 2003-2004 was £496 million (approx. CAN\$1.2 billion)	Local Authorities are the second largest supporters of the arts in England. Local authorities expenditure on arts and culture in 2000-2001 was estimated to be £1.7 billion (CAN\$3.8 billion). Regional Arts Boards are now part of the Arts Council England. A study by Arts Council England showed that in 1999-2000 before the Regional Arts Boards were folded into the Arts Council, the block grant to these associations accounted for 31% of arts council expenditure.
<b>IRELAND</b> (population approx. 4 million)	The Department of Arts, Sports and Tourism is the government department responsible for the arts. The department has a number of schemes that provide some support for culture and the arts,	Figures on local government expenditures on the arts for 2003-2004 are not available, but were estimated to be in the order of €

	including a matching program for capital funding for arts and cultural facilities, a scheme to provide tax relief to new and emerging commercial music groups and a tax incentive scheme for film production. The Arts Council budget for 2003-2004 was €44 million (approx. CAN\$72 million)	million in 1997 (in the range of CAN\$7 to \$8 million).
<b>NORTHERN IRELAND</b> (population approx. 1.5 million)	The Arts Council of Northern Ireland had a budget of £9.6 million in 2003-2004 (approx. CAN\$23 million)	
<b>SCOTLAND</b> (population approx. 5 million)	The Scottish Arts Council had a budget of £47.3 million in 2003-2004 (approx. CAN\$114 million)	
<b>NEW ZEALAND</b> (population approx. 4 million)	Central government spending on culture represented NZ\$823 million in 2003-2004. Creative New Zealand's funding is from both a government appropriation (NZ\$13.5 million – approx. CAN\$12 million) and the New Zealand Lottery Grants Board (NZ\$18.5 million – approx. CAN\$16 million) for a total of about NZ\$33 million (approx. CAN\$28 million).	Total government spending on culture (d) in 2003-2004 by all levels of government was NZ\$1.1 billion (approx. CAN\$932 million).
<b>UNITED STATES</b> (population approx. 293 million)	The NEA is the main source of direct government funding for the arts at the national level. There is no national government department responsible for the arts. A significant portion (approximately 40%) of the NEA's budget goes towards state and regional partnership agreements. The NEA's total appropriation for 2003 was US\$116 million (approx. CAN\$150 million)	State Arts Agencies combined accounted for about three times the appropriation of the NEA in 2003 (US\$350 million for all State Arts Agencies vs. US\$116 million for the NEA)
<b>WALES</b> (population approx. 2.9 million)	Creative Wales had a budget of £23.4 million in 2003-2004 (approx. CAN\$56 million)	
<b>DENMARK</b> (population approx. 5.4 million)	The Danish Arts Council and Danish Arts Foundation had a budget of 479 million krone in 2004 (approx. CAN\$105 million)	
<b>FINLAND</b> (population approx. 5.2 million)	The Ministry of Education is responsible for overseeing arts and culture funding in Finland. Subordinate to the Ministry is the Arts Council of Finland which provides project grants and artist grants. Funding for arts and cultural institutions is allocated through the ministry. Decisions about funding for the cultural institutions are influenced by the position taken by the Arts Council. The overall budget for arts and culture funding for Finland is €270 million (CAN\$440 million).	
<b>NORWAY</b> (population approx. 4.5 million)	The Kulturradet (Council for Cultural Affairs or Arts Council Norway) is responsible for distributing the Norway Cultural Fund worth about NOK 250 million in 2004 (about CAN\$49 million). The Norwegian Arts Council falls under the Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs. The Ministry administers state grants for a large number of theatres, orchestras and museums.	



	Norway has 17 publicly funded theatres that are either wholly financed by the state or between the state and the region.	
<b>SINGAPORE</b> (population approx. 4.4 million)	The Ministry of Communications, Information and the Arts has the primary responsibility for arts funding and for the National Arts Council Singapore. The budget of the arts council was SG\$41 million (approx. CAN\$32 million)	
<b>SWEDEN</b> (population approx. 9 million)	State funding for culture in Sweden amounts to roughly SEK 5.5 billion per year (approx. CAN\$1 billion), equivalent to 0.7% of overall government spending. Of this total, the Council for Cultural Affairs allocates around SEK 1.4 billion (CAN\$257 million) in the form of grants to the performing arts, contemporary arts and museums, plus literature, arts periodicals and libraries, etc.	
<b>SWITZERLAND</b> (population approx 7.5 million)	The Pro Helvetica Foundation (Swiss Arts Council) has a budget of 33 million Swiss francs (approx. CAN\$33 million)	
<b>NETHERLANDS</b> (population approx. 16 million)	The Council for Culture (Raad voor Kultur) is only an advisory body. The Ministry of Culture, Education and Science provides most of the government funding at the national level. According to a report on Cultural Policy in the Netherlands, a large proportion of grant aid for the arts comes from the central government. Total funding for the arts(b) in 2002 in the Netherlands stood at €94.5 million (approx CAN\$474 million). A total of 371 arts organizations are in receipt of a multi-annual subsidy. Total funding of culture (including the arts) by the national government in 2000 stood at €1.5 billion (approx. CAN\$2.4 billion)	
<b>FRANCE</b> (population approx. 61 million)	A total of €6.2 billion (approx. CAN\$10.2 billion) in cultural funding was given by all levels of government in France in 2004. The Ministry of Culture provides €2.6 billion (approx. CAN\$4.3 billion).	
<b>GERMANY</b> (population approx. 82 million)	In the Federal Republic of Germany, according to the Basic Law, the promotion of culture is first and foremost a matter for the Lander (federal states) and the local municipalities. The federal government makes available about 12% of public funds for arts and culture. In 2004, the federal government's contribution amounted to about €948 million (CAN\$1.6 billion). Total spending on arts and culture(c) in 2002 for all government levels was €8.3 billion (approx. CAN\$13.4 billion). A federal ministry of state for culture was created in 1998.	Most of the Lander support and finance their own state theatres and orchestras, as well as museums and other cultural institutions. The main funding for large and renowned arts and cultural organizations in cities such as Berlin and Hamburg comes from funding through the Lander and municipalities. There are over 150 fully financed and permanently staffed public theatres in Germany.
<b>AUSTRIA</b> (population approx. 8 million)	Total public culture expenditure in Austria was €1.9 billion in 2002 (approx. CAN\$3 billion). An estimated 38% of culture funding is at the federal level.	The Lander and municipal governments also provide significant levels of funding for culture.

<b>RUSSIA (population approx. 143 million)</b>	A total of 67.2 billion RUB (CAN\$3.3 billion) in culture funding (culture, arts and mass media) was given by all levels of government in Russia in 2002. Of this about 8 billion RUB (CAN\$391 million) went to performing arts.	
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Information is preliminary and subject to further revision.

(a) The arts as defined in David Throsby's report include literature and publishing, visual art, craft, photography, arts galleries, music, theatre, opera, dance, performing arts venues, community arts, film and video and multimedia.

(b) The arts as defined in the cultural policy report for the Netherlands includes performing arts, film, visual arts and design, architecture, amateur arts and arts education.

(c) Arts and culture as defined in the German data includes theatres and music, libraries, museums, historical monuments, cultural matters in foreign countries, colleges of art and music and administration of culture.

(d) Culture is defined as including: taonga tuku iho, heritage, library services, literature, performing arts, visual arts, film and video, broadcasting, community and government activities.

### (c) Sectoral Comparisons of Arts Funding from Various Countries

Examples from various countries focusing on specific sectors of the arts shed further light on differences between countries in support to the arts. Data on public funding to the performing arts is a case in point.

**Table 3  
Public Expenditure on the Performing Arts**

	<b>Federal</b>	<b>State / Provincial</b>	<b>Municipal</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Austria (2001) €	€23.77 million	€12.73 million	€123.70 million	€14.79 million
<b>Austria (2001) CAN\$</b>	<b>CAN\$316 million</b>	<b>CAN\$301 million</b>	<b>CAN\$174.9 million</b>	<b>CAN\$727 million</b>
Germany (2000) €				€2.80 billion
<b>Germany (2000) CAN\$</b>				<b>CAN\$3.96 billion</b>
Netherlands (2000) €	€168.01 million	€10.00 million	€335.00 million	€13.01 million
<b>Netherlands (2000) CAN\$</b>	<b>CAN\$229.1 million</b>	<b>CAN\$13.6 million</b>	<b>CAN\$457 million</b>	<b>CAN\$699 million</b>
Canada (2002-2003) CAN\$	\$207.9 million	\$171.3 million	\$23.6 million	\$402.8 million

Some individual arts organization comparisons are also revealing, especially in relation to large performing arts organizations. For example, the Royal Shakespeare Company in England receives a grant of £13,270,937 (approximately CAN\$32 million) from Arts Council England which compares with a \$753,000 grant for the Stratford Festival from the Canada Council. The English National Ballet receives £5,325,338 (approximately CAN\$12 million from Arts Council England). This compares with \$2,250,000 for the National Ballet of Canada from the Canada Council.

In France, the Opéra de Paris received an operating grant of €69.5 million (approximately CAN\$114 million from the Ministère de la Culture in 2004). This represents about three-quarters of the total parliamentary appropriation of the Canada Council for the Arts.

Similarly, the five national theatres in France together receive €1.4 million (CAN\$108 million).

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