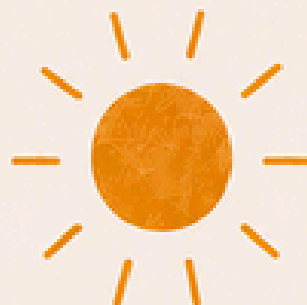


2026–2028 STRATEGIC PLAN



Growing a
Sustainable
Business Model
that Funds
our Mission

Bringing
People
Together
to Learn
and Lead

Building
Shared
Research &
Knowledge
Infrastructure
for the Sector

Co-Creating
Research to
Advance
the Arts.

This is Our Plan

Mass Culture strengthens the arts across Canada.

We bring together people from across the arts sector and from outside of it, to share knowledge. We build research tools the whole sector (arts, culture, heritage and creative) can use, and turn what we learn into resources, data, and support that we share back with the artists, organizations, and institutions that drive the sector forward. We enter this plan with growing visibility and credibility as a trusted sector partner, recognized for its collaborative approach to research, data, knowledge sharing, and capacity building.

This Strategic Plan builds on earlier exploratory work with Impact Toolbox, followed by several months of focused work with a small committee to examine how a social purpose enterprise model could shape Mass Culture's future. For Mass Culture, a social purpose enterprise model generates revenue through mission-aligned research, services, and partnership activities while reinvesting knowledge, tools, and resources back into the arts to create shared value and long-term impact. This holds two commitments together: To build a sustainable earned revenue model, while continuing to return knowledge, tools, and learning back to the sector. These commitments may sometimes be in tension and require careful balancing, but they are also central to the organization's social purpose enterprise approach.



The 2-year plan represents an intentional experiment where we will test the approach, refine it, and build it into how Mass Culture operates day-to-day. Doing so uniquely positions Mass Culture to grow into a national hub for cultural data and research, collaboration and a shared research department for every cultural organization in Canada. This work will address a long-standing problem: scattered and disconnected knowledge infrastructure, relationships, and data in the cultural sector.

Mass Culture puts relationships at the centre of its work. This is essential because lasting change and infrastructure for the sector depend on trust, supporting shared stewardship, and generating collective insight. Rather than focusing on growth for its own sake, we are ensuring that we scale deeply; nurturing relationships and making sure new knowledge leads to sustained meaningful change in practice.

Grounded in our network, sectoral expertise, partnerships, and programming, Mass Culture convenes, facilitates research, develops tools, offers support services, and shares what we learn openly and widely. This work produces gatherings, reports, actionable resources, and lasting partnerships that help the sector to thrive. Together, these efforts connect the sector, deepen use and understanding of data, and proliferate research completed by ourselves and others.

This work is guided by four strategic priorities, which we refer to as play structures:



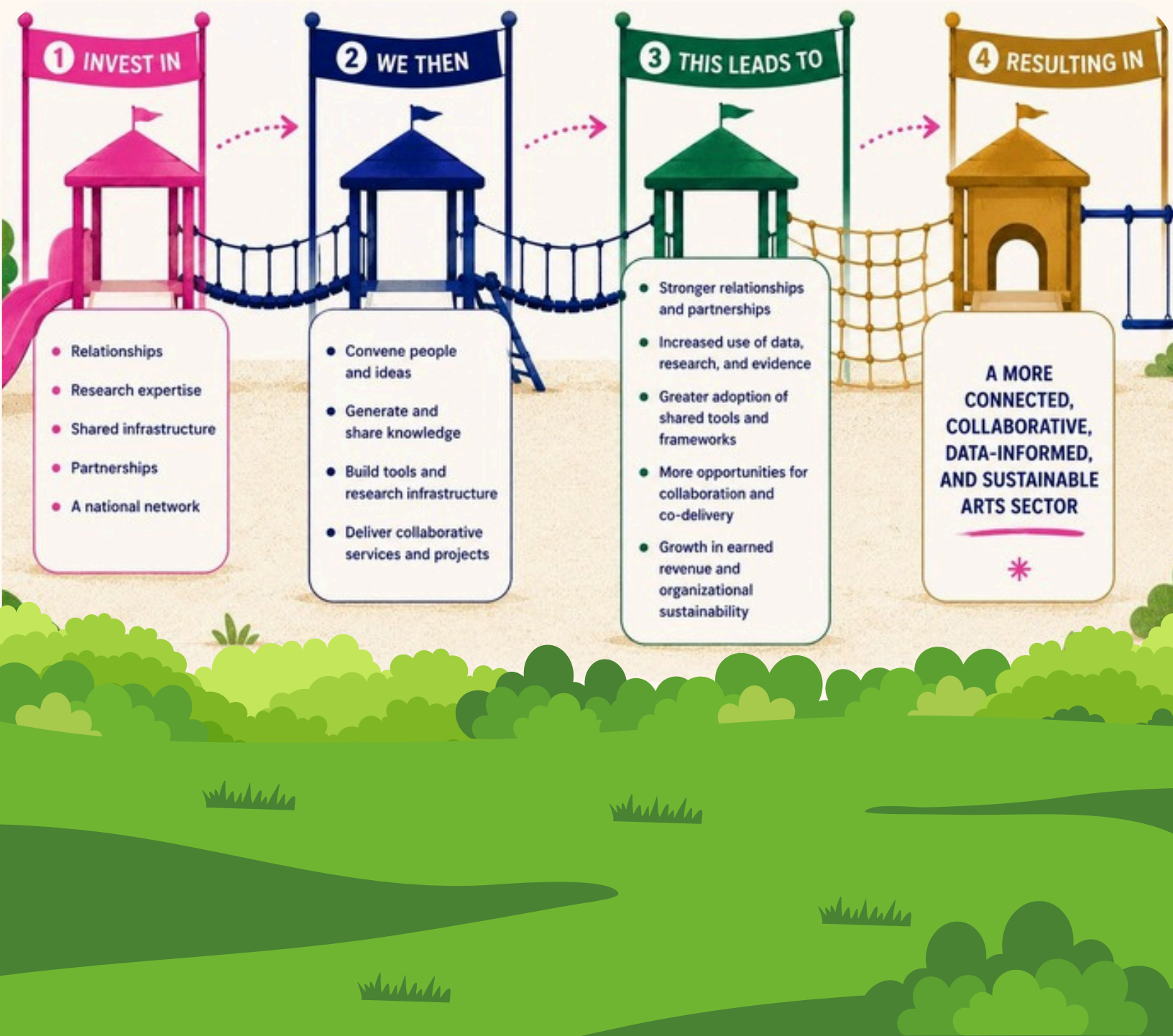
Because we will be learning and adjusting along the way, we will track our progress closely and publish a “How We’re Doing” update each September. This keeps us open, accountable, and continually learning as we grow.

By 2028, our goal is for Mass Culture to be known across Canada as a trusted, active network where the sector works together meaningfully. We aim to be the go-to gathering space for research and knowledge in the sector, with broad adoption of our research and data tools. Supported by income from a range of sources, we will be more financially resilient, and able to support a circular economy of knowledge for artists, organizations, and communities that make up Canada’s cultural and creative sector.



Our Theory of Change

By convening networks, advancing knowledge, building shared infrastructure, and operating a social purpose enterprise, Mass Culture strengthens the relationships, insights, and resources needed for a more connected, informed, and sustainable arts sector.





Play Structure 1: Growing a Sustainable Business Model that Funds our Mission

Vision

Mass Culture operates a sustainable social purpose enterprise model where collaborative consulting and research services generate both revenue and shared knowledge that puts these back into the sector (circular economy of knowledge) to continue to strengthen it.

A mission-driven business model that generates revenue through services, partnerships, and projects while advancing the organization's public benefit purpose. Revenue is reinvested into the organization and the broader sector through research, tools, infrastructure, and shared learning, ensuring that economic activity creates both financial sustainability and social value.

Why it Matters

To grow our impact, Mass Culture needs a steady source of income that aligns with our mission. By expanding what we offer, strengthening partnerships, and leveraging our networks of networks to deliver projects together, we can earn revenue while ensuring that knowledge, tools, and opportunities flow back into the sector.

Our Approach

Mass Culture will:

- Build a clear set of services that a variety of groups understand and can easily access.
- Use our network as a way to deliver work and bring in revenue.
- Balance public good and organizational value (ROI) without losing sight of our mission.
- Commit to sharing what we learn back with the sector.



Goal 1.1: Increase earned revenue and diversify sources of income

- Increase earned revenue by offering clearly defined support services that meet the sector needs.

Goal 1.2: Share knowledge back with the sector (Circular Knowledge Economy)

- Ensure that knowledge generated through our projects is reinvested into the sector as shared tools, frameworks, and resources others can use.

Goal 1.3: Build revenue through collaborative Delivery

- Growing our network's role in co-delivering projects together, opening up revenue opportunities, and strengthening reciprocity between Mass Culture and our network.



Why Not Theatre's Space Study Launch 2025 with Ravi Jain, Robin Sokoloski, Mary Anderson & Michelle Yeung





Play Structure 2: Bringing People Together to Learn and Lead

Vision

Mass Culture convenes across boundaries, creating spaces where artists, organizations, funders, researchers, and public and private institutions- people who don't typically share the same sandbox- come together to build relationships, make sense of complex challenges, and generate collective insight that strengthens the arts sector.

Why it Matters

While the sector is fragmented, there is an emerging appetite for collaboration, mutual support, and creating solutions together, even amid constrained resources. Mass Culture is well positioned to transform collective energy into action. By deepening this engagement and activating its network, we support collaboration, shared leadership, and the sector's capacity to learn, reflect, and act together.

Our Approach

Mass Culture will:

- Root our work in reciprocal relationships where meaningful exchange extends beyond transactions to strengthen communities, collaborators, and the arts sector.
- Work with our network as both a source of collective knowledge building and a model for collaborative delivery.
- Strengthen a network where relationships continue to grow beyond our involvement, inspiring ongoing research, evaluation, and data practices.
- Move at the pace trust allows, turning convening conversations to collective action and shared leadership



Goal 2.1: Deepen network engagement and relational strength

- Strengthen ongoing participation across Mass Culture's Networked Governance Body (the group of people who help guide our work).

Goal 2.2: Activate the network for partnerships and co-delivery

- Build and strengthen partnerships within our network that move from connection to co-creation over time.

Goal 2.3: Expand cross-sector connectivity

- Strengthen connections with people and organizations outside the arts and culture sector and in related fields.





Play Structure 3: Building Shared Research & Knowledge Infrastructure for the Sector

Vision

Mass Culture serves as the research playground for Canada's arts, culture, heritage and creative sectors, contributing to a shared knowledge infrastructure, methodologies, and tools that help people make sense of information and put it into practice. Shared knowledge infrastructure means building the common tools, platforms, methods, and relationships that enable the arts sector to generate, interpret, and apply knowledge collectively.

Why it Matters

As a sector, we continue to operate without consistent, shared systems for organizing, accessing, and using data and information. This makes it hard to make informed decisions or deepen collective insight. By always thinking about how to improve access to tools like the Data Narratives for the Arts Initiative and supporting their meaningful use and ease of use in practice, Mass Culture strengthens sector skills, helps avoid duplicate efforts, and makes evaluation and learning more coordinated and useful.

Our Approach

Mass Culture will:

- Commit to building, maintaining, and evolving Mass Culture's tools for the sector for using data and research.
- Position and continually evolve the DNA Initiative into a shared, go-to place where the sector's knowledge lives.
- Learn, respect, and share more about data sovereignty (the right of people and communities to control their own data), data safety, and ethical practices so that the sector owns and benefits from its own information.



Goal 3.1: Expand adoption of DNA Initiative and research tools

- Increase real, ongoing use of the DNA Platform. Not just sign-ups, but active use in people's work.

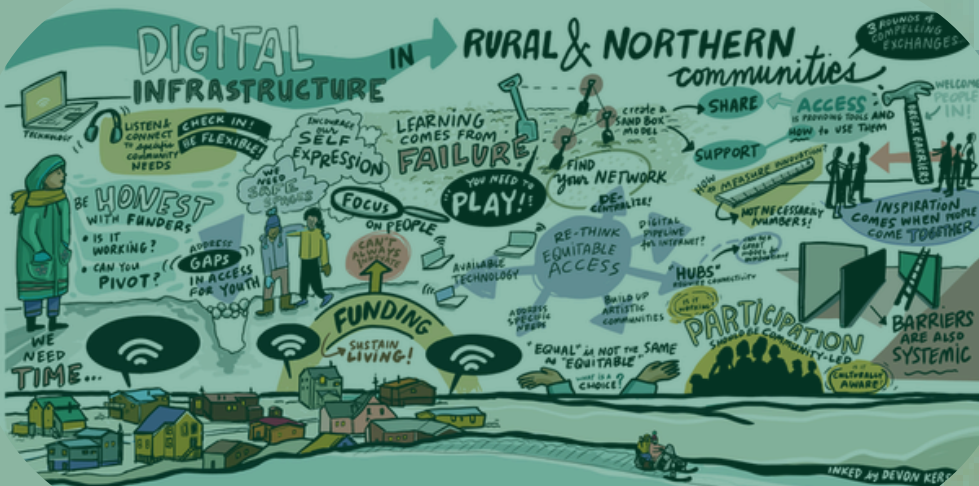
Goal 3.2: Build the skills and confidence of arts workers using research, evaluation, and data

- Support arts workers in building skills by offering training in how to use their own organization's qualitative and quantitative data well, and by helping people use more consistent methods for evaluation and research.

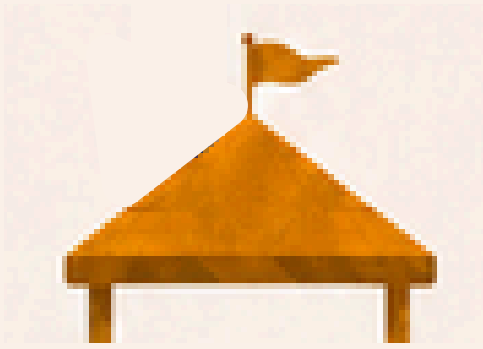
Goal 3.3: Show our impact across the sector and beyond the people we work with directly

- Demonstrate the ripple effects of our work and how it shapes actions, collaborations, and practices beyond the people we work with directly.

Graphic Recording of Mass Culture Workshop 2020
by Devon Kerslake



Building
Shared
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Play Structure 4: Co-Creating Research to Advance the Arts

Vision

Mass Culture helps people inside and outside the sector better understand the contributions of the arts by making research convenient, accessible, and trustworthy.

Why it Matters

There is a growing need for the arts and creative sector to better understand its own impact and communicate it in ways that inform decisions and demonstrate its value. By working with organizations to answer the questions that matter most to them, Mass Culture turns research into practical evidence that helps the sector tell its story with confidence. It also means supporting evaluative practices that are not only about measurement, but about learning and reflection to guide future decisions.

Our Approach

Mass Culture will:

- Shift from proving value to understanding and articulating the changes and differences the arts are making in concert with the sector.
- Bridge academic research and arts practice by partnering with researchers, funders, and cultural organizations to co-create research that is both rigorous and relevant.
- Stay credible by being rigorous, thoughtful, and transparent about whose voices and perspectives shape our work while helping others act on what we learn.



Goal 4.1: Advance sector-embedded research

- Partner with arts organizations to investigate the questions that matter most to them through collaborative research and evaluative practice, generating knowledge that directly informs their decisions and strengthens their work.

Goal 4.2: Mobilize knowledge for sector-wide learning

- Translate research, evaluation, and practice-based learning into accessible tools, frameworks, resources, and shared insights that others across the arts and creative sector can adapt, apply, and build upon.



Maia Pelletier, Data Coach (Purpose Analytics)
with Robert Sauvey, Data Fellow (DUO), 2025





You Might Be Wondering...

"This all sounds great... but where are the objectives, actions, targets, and measures?"

Fair question.

There's a saying that *"all well-intended plans..."* (you know the rest). As a learning organization, we believe a strategic plan should provide direction.

That's why we've separated the **strategy** from the **operations**.

Our strategic plan explains where we're headed and why. Our annual operating plan, built in Airtable captures how we'll get there. It includes the objectives, projects, responsibilities, timelines, and day-to-day work that bring this strategy to life.

By making our operating plan convenient to access, our Network Governance Body of more than 40 members (and the arts sector itself for that matter) can follow our progress, hold us accountable, and see how our work connects back to these strategic goals. Because it's a living operating plan, we can adapt it as we learn, rather than waiting two years to make changes.

And what about targets and measures?

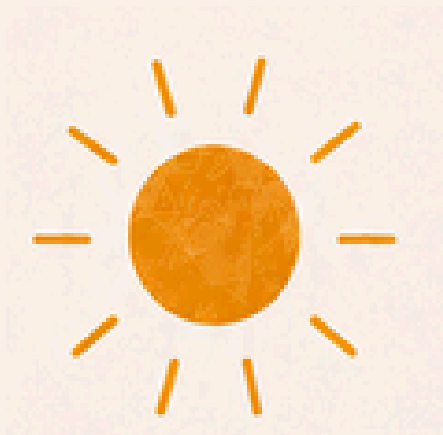
Those live in our evaluation framework. What would Mass Culture be if we didn't practice what we preach? Rather than measuring activity for the sake of measuring activity, we've organized our indicators around the questions we're trying to answer. The framework outlines what we want to understand, how we'll collect evidence, who is responsible, and when it's time to pause, reflect, and make sense of what we're learning.

After all, the goal isn't simply to complete the plan, it's to keep learning from it.

Important Links

- [Operations Management Plan](#)
- [Evaluation Framework](#)





Robin Sokoloski presenting
on data & evaluation, 2025



The Mass Culture Podcast, ep. 1
with Robin Sokoloski and Michelle Chawla



massculture.ca

