



OPERA CIVIC IMPACT FRAMEWORK

In celebration of our 20th Anniversary season, we present the Opera Civic Impact Framework. The framework is a result of our five-year strategic plan, Charting our Civic Impact, and reflects existing civic practices in the opera sector. It is designed to capture impact data in an iterative way, supporting the opera sector's commitment to creating strong and positive civic impact in communities across Canada.



Opera companies across Canada are engaged in a host of civic impact activities that go beyond the important offering of staging high-quality, full-length opera productions.

We identified **five major civic impact theme areas** under which these various civic impact activities can be aligned.

Experience

Opera is a multidisciplinary art form that combines universal stories, drama, the unamplified human voice and music, which can result in a powerful sensory and emotional experience and new ways of experiencing and engaging with the world.

Access

Opera is financially, physically, cognitively and emotionally accessible to community members through the reduction of barriers and creation of multiple entry points.

Education

Opera-based educational activities lead to positive outcomes such as the development of core competencies like creativity, collaboration, communication and critical thinking for children and youth and contribute to life-long learning for adults.

Community

Opera is a tool to build community by contributing to a stronger sense of empathy, appreciation for difference and a greater sense of belonging.

Truth and Reconciliation

Opera has the ability to participate in truth and reconciliation between Indigenous and settler communities by participating in Indigenous-led collaborative projects and co-producing works that contribute to the truth and reconciliation process.

CORE ACTIVITIES:**WHAT WE ARE MEASURING****Experience**

- Stage high-quality, full-length opera productions and chamber operas

Enjoyment
 Captivation
 Catharsis
 Cognitive growth

Access

- Provide free or discounted tickets to performances
- Offer relaxed performances where a calmer sensory experience is provided and a more casual environment is created where normal rules don't apply
- Provide opportunities for students to experience live opera performances
- Bring opera out of the theatre and into the community

Exposure
 Comfort
 Belonging
 Conversion
 Interest

Education

- Provide educational programming to children and youth in schools and learning tools/resources for teachers
- Offer in-school opera intensives, after school programs and summer camps for children and youth to learn about and create their own works
- Provide programs to families with young children
- Provide opportunities for students to experience live opera performances
- Host pre-show opera talks for patrons and the broader community

Engagement
 Core competencies
 Connections
 Pride
 Appreciation

Community

- Develop original operas that are pertinent to the time and/or the region
- Organize thematic events surrounding a production, often in partnership with other community organizations that provide additional context
- Use opera to give communities an opportunity to engage in creative practice and a voice to tell their own stories, including marginalized populations (e.g. individuals experiencing homelessness or mental health issues)

Relevance
 Pride
 Empathy
 Cohesion
 Belonging
 Motivation
 Confidence
 Self-expression
 Skills development
 Mental health and well-being

Truth and Reconciliation

- Invite Indigenous board members to help lead the organization and establish a meaningful balance of input from the Indigenous community
- Establish an Indigenous Advisory Council made up of local Indigenous community members, and through this process:
- Work in collaboration with Indigenous partners and artists to establish boundaries and ways of working that create an environment in which Indigenous partners feel respected and safe, not simply like tokens to further an agenda, and ensure collaboration is Indigenous-led
- Share successes and recognize that successes never come without mistakes, so allow for these mistakes to become constructive by listening and learning from them
- Train staff and board members in cultural humility: humility is paramount because even with an open mind and the absolute best of intentions, implicit bias will mean that some regular processes which a company may take for granted as standard professional practice may be counter to the goals and needs of the project and conflict with the perspective or values of the First Nation community you are working with
- Embed place-based protocols traditions (e.g. land acknowledgements): find out what would be most meaningful to Indigenous people in the local community and follow what they would prefer
- Co-create new operas, remaining aware of what stories are being told and finding ways to bring up that Indigenous peoples are still here and living, as all humans do
- Design and deliver programming and community initiatives that are inclusive of Indigenous ways of knowing around topics identified and approved by Indigenous partners and Indigenous Advisory Council
- Understand and adhere to local Indigenous protocols around knowledge sharing, data collection and data ownership
- Create a process for checking in with those who are performing these stories, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous and provide the necessary support

Cultural humility
 Authenticity
 Integrity
 Awareness
 Agency
 Reciprocity

Our future plans are to tool this into a digital platform for collecting data and reporting out on outcomes and impacts, scaling the platform to include other art forms, and through a specialized A.I. called ontology, building connections between other impact frameworks, creating new capacities to tell our story of impact either through an arts lens or through the lenses of our non-arts partners at a local, provincial, national or global level.

For more information about our future plans for scaling the framework and our digital next steps, contact Christina Loewen.

