



Artist As Changemaker

2021 REPORT

THE PROJECT

A partnership between The Trico Changemakers Studio and Calgary Arts Development, the *Artist as Changemaker (AAC)* Project is an initiative to illuminate, elevate, and expedite the capacity of socially engaged artists to create meaningful social change. The Artist as Changemaker Project is designed for and by artists. It exists to reveal the relationship between art, the artistic process, and social innovation theory in creating pathways for change.

OUR PREMISE

We believe artists have a unique role to play in accelerating social change for the betterment of people and the planet. Combining the artistic process with the tools of social innovation can help socially engaged artists identify leverage points to amplify change.

THE RESIDENCY PROGRAM

The Artist As Changemaker Residency Program is a direct outcome of the Artist as Changemaker Project. The second pilot of the residency program launched in January 2021 and ran until June 2021. Artists expressed the importance of leveraging relationships with organizations on the front lines of social problems, which informed the focus of the 2021 residency: *How might artists and organizations work together to address complex challenges?*



2021 Residency Objectives

EXPAND ON SOCIAL INNOVATION AND SYSTEMS CHANGE LEARNING

- Each artist and their organization partner worked collaboratively to identify a social challenge. This challenge was then translated into the 'How Might We' question framework during the social innovation courses. The 'How Might We' questions were then used to guide the work of the artist's residency.

INVEST AND DEEPEN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ARTISTS AND ORGANIZATIONAL PARTNERS

- Built in engagement opportunities throughout the program served to build an environment of trust, knowledge sharing, and deep connection between program participants.

EMPHASIS ON PROCESS AS WELL AS PRODUCT AS AN OUTCOME

- Focused on the artistic processes used by the artists to gain deeper insight and understanding into the role that artists play in social change and transformation through the artwork.

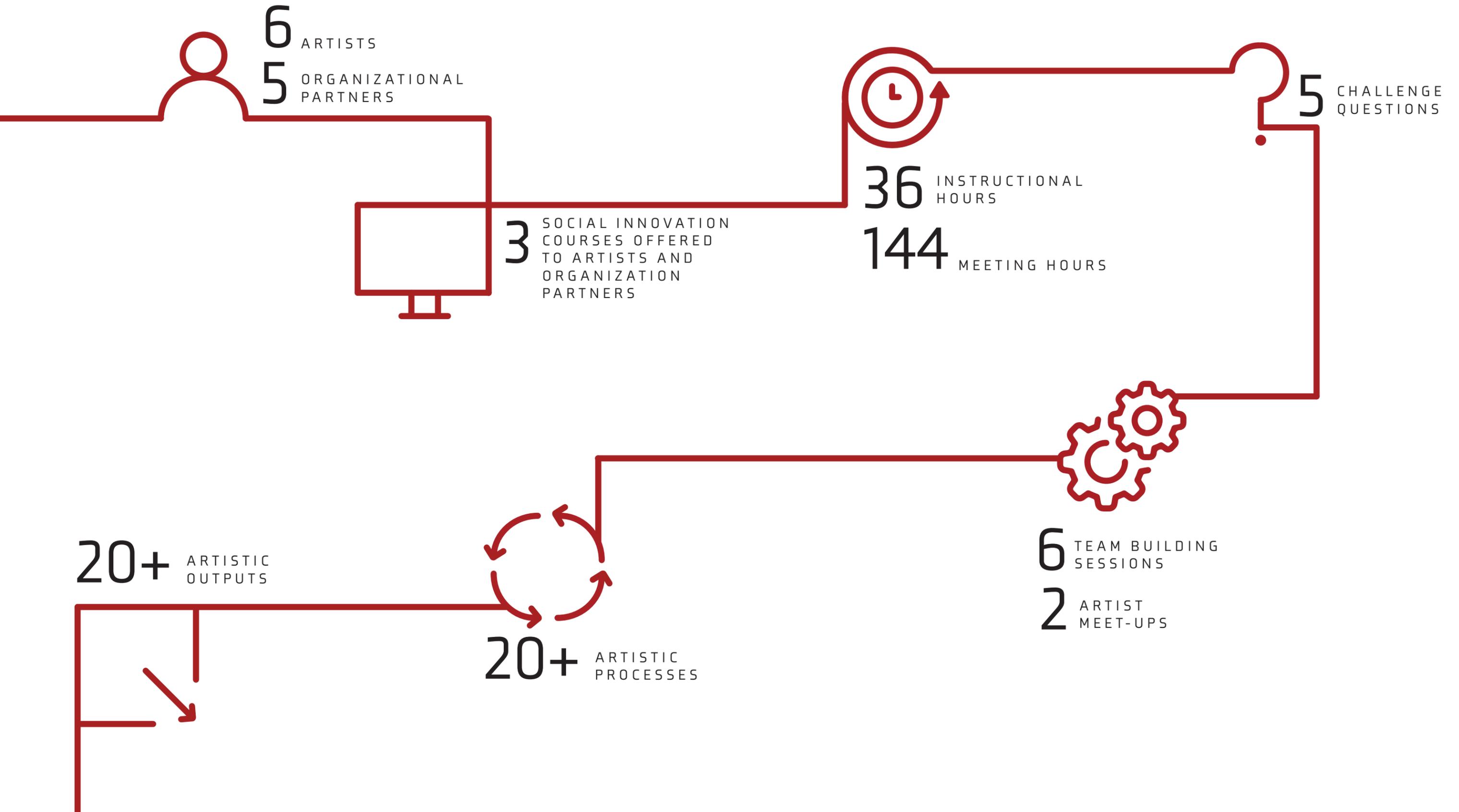
HOW MIGHT WE

This powerful question frame is the starting point for all of our work.

"The HOW part assumes there are solutions out there — it provides creative confidence. MIGHT says we can put ideas out there that might work or might not — either way, it's OK. And the WE part says we're going to do it together and build on each other's ideas."

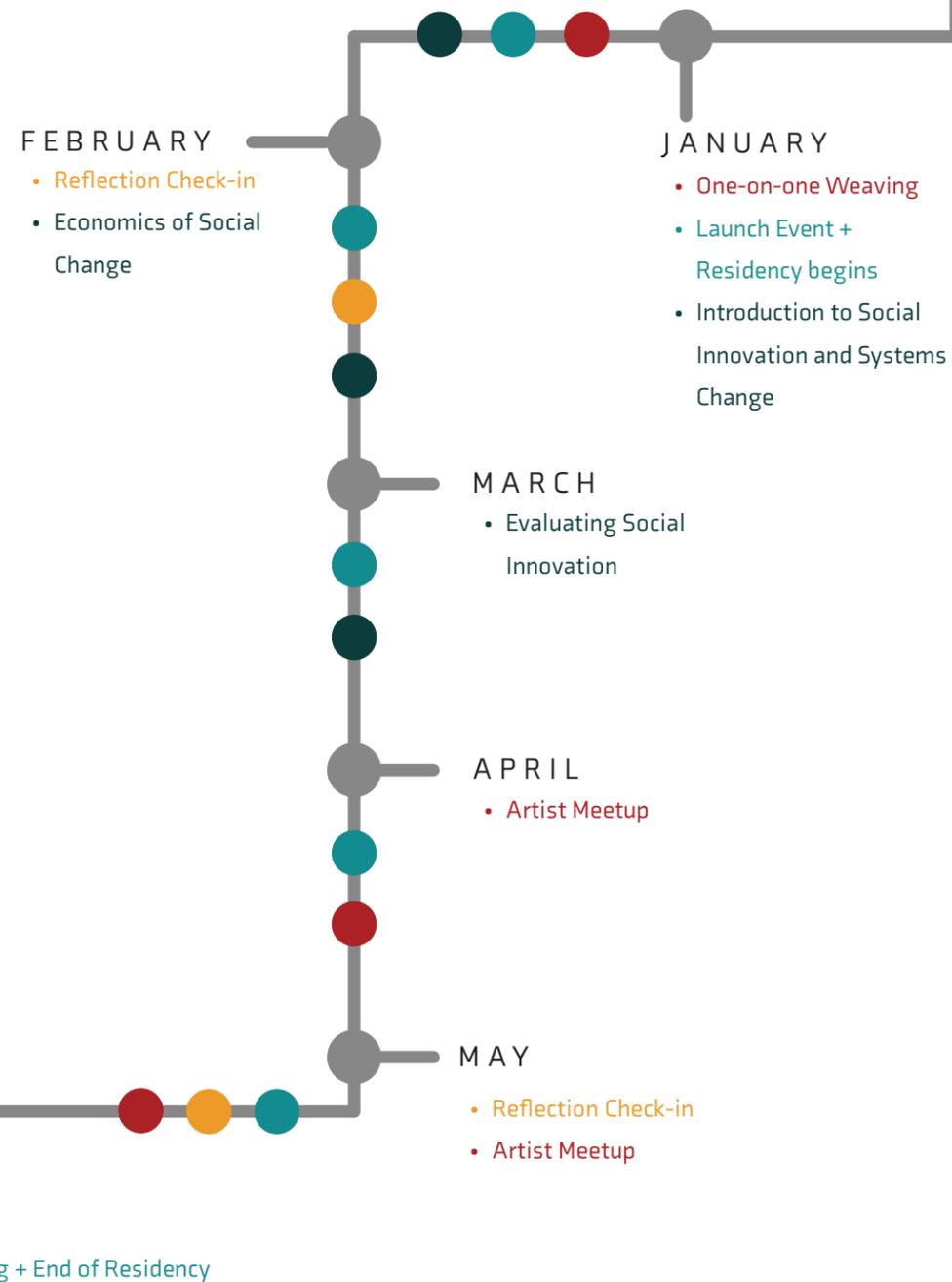
Tim Brown, IDEO

Over the Course of Six Months...



Residency Program Journey

- THE PROCESS
- EVALUATION
- INVESTING IN + DEEPENING RELATIONSHIPS
- EXPANDING SOCIAL INNOVATION + SYSTEMS CHANGE LEARNING



2021 Partnerships + Challenge Questions



MEL VEE X + SKYE LOUIS WITH ACTION DIGNITY

How might we illuminate the dignity and wholeness of human experience outside the confines of language and connect respectfully and joyfully across differences?



TITO GOMEZ WITH CONFEDERATION PARK 55+ ACTIVITY CENTRE

How might we bring the conversation to how seniors in the community face racism and how they are viewed within the community?



MELANEE MURRAY-HUNT WITH SAGESSE

How might we raise awareness about a form of domestic violence known as "coercive control?"



BARBARA AMOS WITH TRICO LIVINGWELL

How might we transform the perception of ageism and start improving the experiences of older adults in a meaningful way, by supporting interactions that are authentic, individualized, and use a wellness-based approach that is focused on purposeful engagement through a creative process?



KEVIN JESUINO WITH TRICO CHANGEMAKERS STUDIO

How might we achieve transformational learning towards systems change in a two dimensional virtual setting?

The artistic outcomes and processes from the 2021 Artist as Changemaker Residency can be viewed [here](#).

Change is Happening

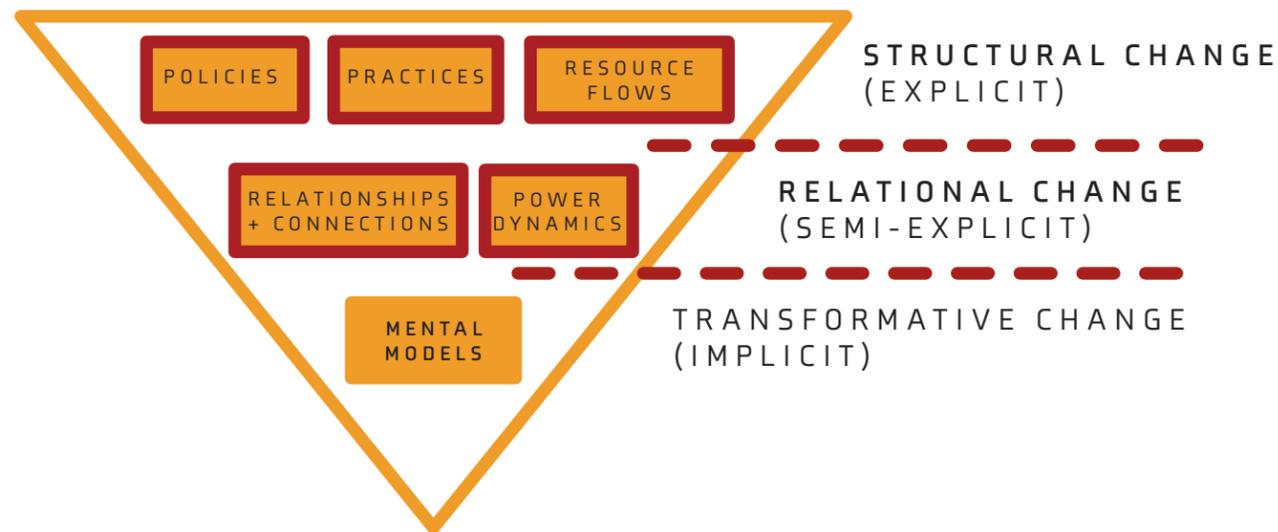
The Artist as Changemaker Project began with the inquiry: *How might we build the capacity of artists to expedite meaningful social change?*

Through the first and second pilot of the Residency Program we've learned that cross sector collaboration is key in building capacity. Artists choosing to work with organizations that are already tackling complex social challenges served as fertile ground for them to demonstrate their abilities to amplify change.

Furthermore, using the [Six Conditions of Systems Change](#) framework, the outcomes of the second year of the Artist as Changemaker Residency can be seen at the level of structural and relational change.

- **Structural Change:** Policies, Practices, Resource flows
- **Relational Change:** Relationships and Connections, Power Dynamics
- **Transformative Change:** Mental Models

In particular, practices, resource flows, relationships and connections, and power dynamics.



PRACTICES

Artists have refined and deepened their artistic process as it relates to social change. For many community partners, entering into a process of understanding complexity and systems thinking with an artist is new.

"It's affirming as an artist to be part of this project because I see that I am being valued and recognized for my work and have the opportunity to dive into the work of social impact. Looking at how far we can take things as artists by having tools and concepts from Social Innovation makes me realize which ideas can take fruition and that has been really powerful to me."

Artist

"The artistic process is not as structured. And how artists get to places is not the direct way that I am used to. I've learned that for artists it's not 9-5pm, it's based on let me look at things deeper, a lot of research, and inspiration."

Organization Representative

RESOURCE FLOWS

Artists are paid for their work, and expertise are valued by organization partners. Furthermore, some organizations working with the artists have allocated funding to the continued development of initiatives proposed by the artist. Other artists have been able to gain more opportunities for paid work.

"We will use the artist's work as part of our orientation program, and we'll hire an artist to anchor and lead the program [that is being developed as a result of the residency]."

Organization Representative

"It is nice to get paid for my work. Also a good boost to my resume. Although I am working with arts, I'm working with a non-arts organization and this helps when it comes to sharing with other organizations who are interested in this work. All of this is enhancing my outlook and my artwork."

Artist

RELATIONSHIPS AND CONNECTIONS

Feeling valued and respected enables artists to bring the richness of their practice to the mission of the organization partner. Furthermore, artists having a previous relationship with their chosen organization has allowed for deep connections to emerge and an eagerness to continue working together.

"Our organization representative believes in the arts and believes in what we do, it's great to feel supported in this way."

Artist

"Previous relationship with our artist has left me more excited about what's possible when we engage and work together."

Organization Representative

POWER DYNAMICS

This residency placed artists at the forefront to contribute their skills in the decision making process. Artists in the residency played a pivotal role in bringing their unique practice to social change, and allowed organizations to enter into challenges from a different perspective.

"The artist's questioning and guidance allowed us to do this [project]. It was very intuitive, insightful and articulate."

Organization Representative

"My life skills are coming forward in a way that is meaningful. I enjoy that I can bring something relevant to the organization and representatives' working lives."

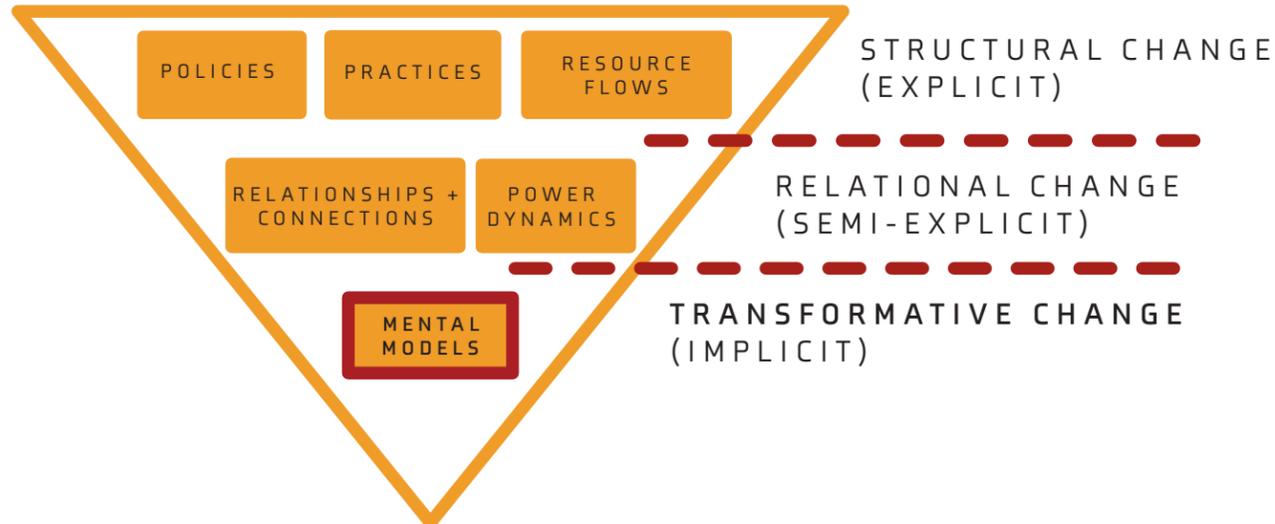
Artist

Getting Down to the Iceberg

Through the Artist as Changemaker project we are learning that Artists practice and develop skills that bring meaning to complex social issues. They are deeply in touch with the human experience and human emotions and use art to make the complex more accessible and easier to understand. Artists are storytellers and enable others to see new perspectives through a lens of curiosity. In return, artists have increased empathy and a deeper understanding of issues affecting our communities.

Our assumption is that artists are able to get to the bottom of the iceberg very quickly. In sharing the creative outputs from the residency more broadly as the next step of the Artist as Changemaker Project, we believe change will happen at the transformative level where individuals will have a shift in mental models that influence their actions with others.

"Art can help make issues more accessible and easier to understand, people are drawn to art and it's interesting ways of presenting information. This has helped me to think more about how as an organization we can use art as a tool to capture people's attention and raise awareness on social issues."
 Organization Representative



THANK YOU TO THE ARTISTS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND OUR SUPPORTING PARTNERS

Barbara Amos, Kevin Jesuino, Tito Gomez, Skye Louis, Melanee Murray-Hunt, MelVee X



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