



2018 Annual Report



We seek, collect, and share stories of Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

Vision

We see Canada as a place where everyone feels welcome and has a strong sense of well-being and belonging.

Mission

We seek, collect, and share stories of new and developing Canadians from coast to coast to coast. Every story we hear helps us learn more about the people who live in Canada and how we as a nation define what it means to be Canadian. Through our projects, we strive to utilize stories to build a nation of empathetic citizens, public services and policies.

Our practice utilizes design thinking as a way of tackling challenges facing Canadians in civic engagement. We believe that the well-being of our communities relies on the strength of each and every person in Canada feeling represented by the decisions made around them. Our projects focus on telling the stories of new and developing Canadians.

We define “**new**” as newcomers; individuals who have chosen to call Canada home. About 1 in 5 individuals in Canada are foreign-born bringing their own culture, languages, and stories with them.

We define “**developing**” as youth; individuals who are growing up in Canada. Approximately 25% of Canada’s population are youth who are more diverse, connected, socially engaged, and educated than ever before.

Our projects aim to gain a clear understanding of the evolving definition of what it means to be Canadian from these individuals, to develop a deeper sense of belonging and well-being as a citizen, and engage citizens in their communities in active decision-making.

Values

Community-led
Future-oriented
Co-Design
Systems Change
Empathy

Board of Directors

President	Jeanne LeSage , CHRL, MBA Arts Consultant, LeSage Arts Management
VP / Secretary	Anthea Foyer Culture Planner, City of Mississauga
Treasurer	Jennifer Green Philanthropy and Programs Director, Toronto Arts Foundation
Directors	Trevor Haldenby Orchestration Director, Syntegrity Jeannette Hanna VP, Strategy, Trajectory Brands Inc. Chris Kostopoulos Co-Founder and COO, Gemba Social Finance Brian Phillips Owner, World Salon Darren Sutherland Senior Manager, Deloitte LLP

Team

Executive Director	Blair Francey
Director of Programming	Jennifer Chan
Program Manager, The Stories of Us	Mathura Mahendren

Message from the Board

2018 wraps up the first full year of operation for the Department of Imaginary Affairs as an incorporated not-for-profit entity. It has been a busy year for all involved, but one that shows great potential and exciting times ahead for the team that is leading the charge.

We were thrilled to watch this fledgling organization receive its first major contribution from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) allowing the team to move forward with The Stories of Us project. This is a great sign for the DIA to really delve into the work that had been percolating since its inception.

It is not an easy task to start up a not-for-profit. There are many different aspects of the organization that have to come together to make the whole. What the DIA has been able to achieve in a short amount of time is impressive and we congratulate our leaders for jumping in head first.

This is only the beginning and we are confident that the next few years will yield impressive and fascinating stories, experiences and challenges. The DIA is here to challenge the systems in place and elevate the stories of those who are new and developing Canadians.

To that end, we are excited to see what comes next.

Sincerely,
The DIA Board of Directors

Message from the Executive Team

“Home is, in the end, not just the place where you sleep, but the place where you stand” – Pico Iyer

Storytelling has always been an integral part of the human experience. It's how we learn, how we grow, how we learn empathy, and experience sympathy. Stories come in countless forms. We all have a story to tell. Some stories are told louder than others. Most of us probably think our story isn't very important or worth telling. But without them, who would we be? We are who we are because of the experiences we've had in our lives. The sum of those experiences are the stories that are worth telling. Every single one.

In 2018, we were given the opportunity to uncover some of these hidden stories. Stories of triumph, sorrow, loss, excitement - all from the perspective of those who left the lives they had built in another country and made their way to the land we know as Canada.

The idea of having to uproot your entire life is unimaginable for many of us. We, as Canadians, are born into a country of peace, stability, and prosperity. The journey of a newcomer is one we most likely will never experience.

The Stories of Us project was conceived as a way of helping newcomers learn English through their own experiences by authoring a book about their journey as an immigrant. With a three year funding commitment from the federal government, we have been able to begin the work of surfacing these important and vital stories. Although there were only 4 months of full-time work after receiving our funding, the project has already been enriched by the outpouring of support and willingness to participate by those newcomers we have had the pleasure of getting to know.

As with all of our work, our design process has helped us understand what is working, what isn't, how we can pivot to better adapt and change with the feedback we receive and observations we make.

When we started our work in earnest, we decided it was important to be as open and transparent about the process; what challenges were we facing along the way and what successes did we happen upon. We started a series on our website called #thisisimaginationatwork as a way to reflect on the project to date. It's a place where we can be honest with ourselves and others about how the work we do gets done.

We expanded the DIA team in more ways than one in 2018. Thanks to the contribution from the government, we were able to hire a Program Manager to forge ahead and develop/deploy The Stories of Us. We were thrilled to bring on Mathura who has taken the challenge of figuring out how we make this idea into reality. . She has brought an incredible amount of knowledge, thoughtful ideas, patience, and laughter to the table. Thanks to her keen observations and willingness to try anything out to see if it works, The Stories of Us has taken off.

We also welcomed a new member of the DIA team, baby Logan! He comes to the majority of our meetings and contributes an incredible smile and curiosity for everything around him. He is our Minister of Naps.

While the end of 2018 was just the beginning of what promises to be an exciting new year, nothing will quite compare to getting that email giving us the thumbs up for funding for the first time. And thanks to that, we now have a new tradition of going for ice cream with each successful grant ... because everything tastes better with ice cream.



Blair Francey
Executive Director



Jennifer Chan
Director of Programming

The Stories of Us

“Over the past 2 hours, I was here for one hour and back home for another. Thank you for letting me travel back home today.”

– Workshop participant

This year marks the first official year of The Stories of Us project (formerly known as the Story Stitching Project), and what a year it has been! Supported by funding from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), we took our first steps toward our ultimate goal of building an ESL library of stories by newcomers for newcomers. This year we focused on building our network in Toronto and connecting with partner organizations (community centres, social service providers, libraries, and ESL schools) to host storytelling workshops with the newcomers they serve. From a two-hour workshop, to a half-day workshop, to a 6-week workshop series, we have been able to test and refine different workshop models and storytelling tools that we are excited to take across Ontario in the coming year!

The Stories of Us in Numbers

7 workshops with **7** partner organizations

148 participants

34 nationalities represented

36 translators on our list

72 organizations that we've connected with directly (via phone, in-person, email)

3 stories submitted

A letter from Mathura Mahendren, Program Manager:

Dear SoU,

Letter writing has been such an integral part of many The Stories of Us workshops to date, and it felt only fitting to reflect on what you've taught me in your first year in the form of a letter. I'll admit, you overwhelmed me at first. You were an experiment and it took me some time to own that.

Once I did, the lessons flowed in:

- You've taught me, through the reaction of every person I mention you to, that you are the manifestation of what so many people want to see in the world.
- You've taught me that I cannot facilitate the telling of others' stories without confronting my own.
- You've taught me that evaluating you in numbers is not enough.
- You've taught me to see impact in the affirmation that participants are able to voice to each other as they share their stories, in the connection a translator feels to a storyteller when they translate their story, in the mounting confidence of those who were once convinced their story wasn't worth sharing, in the quiet catharsis of a room of newcomers drawing their lives as rivers, and in the infectious energy of educators who can't wait to include you in their curriculum.
- You've taught me that with the right partners, there's no need to "sell" you. They get it.
- You've taught me to have empathy for funders who are willing to step into the uncertainty of what you are for long enough to see the unique impact you've had and will have on your ecosystem.
- You've taught me, as one practitioner described, "the value of the 'soft', 'touchy-feely' act of storytelling as a legit, powerful tool to inform our work."
- You've taught me that The Stories of Us are already within us, they just have to be coaxed out. So far, I've learned that they respond well to dedicated time and space, activities that provide just enough structure for flow, peers that provide permission and validation, and of course, delicious food.

Here's to more learning from you, SoU!

Love,

Mathura



We had the privilege of working with some amazing people in 2018 on The Stories of Us. We were able to work with the first group of students in the Centennial Design Jam: Ann-Marie (left), Christine De Guzman (middle), and Sanket Shah (right). They provided us with much needed admin support when we started the beginning of our funding. The team was great to work with. Christine and Sanket even wrote a story to be included in The Stories of Us library as they both arrived in Canada to study at Centennial! We wish them all the best in the future endeavours.



The DIA was invited to participate in the BRAVE Festival at Harbourfront Centre. Though a blustery weekend, we were able to interact with the public and gather mini stories in a public-art installation that we were about their experiences as a newcomer or with someone who was a newcomer.



In September, we hosted our first workshop at Ontario Culture Days at York Woods Branch and Northern District Branch. This was the first time we had a chance to try out our workshop model. The event was a huge success for us and we were awarded the Removing Barriers to Access award from Culture Days for the project.

Message from the Executive Team

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Future Happens Here

Through the funding received from the School for Social Entrepreneurs in 2017, we were able to playtest Future Happens Here with community organizations and facilitators to further test play mechanics and card design.

We hosted 4 playtesting workshops in 2018 with a variety of groups with different goals to diversify the feedback we would receive. Each workshop was framed around the “Future of” _____ - the blank filled in by the host of the workshop prior to sending out invitations. The workshops ranged from the future of climate change and accessibility, to social activism, to youth justice system, to education.

The playtesting workshops yielded feedback to help refine the design of the cards and simplify the content of the cards. The overall feedback has been positive and we look forward to rolling out the new design in 2019.



Independent Practitioner's Review Engagement Report

To the Directors of Department of Imaginary Affairs

We have reviewed the accompanying financial statements of Department of Imaginary Affairs that comprise the balance sheet as at December 31, 2018 and the statements of operations and changes in net assets and cash flows for the year then ended, and a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information.

Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Practitioner's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express a conclusion on the accompanying financial statements based on our review. We conducted our review in accordance with Canadian generally accepted standards for review engagements, which require us to comply with relevant ethical requirements.

A review of financial statements in accordance with Canadian generally accepted standards for review engagements is a limited assurance engagement. The practitioner performs procedures, primarily consisting of making inquiries of management and others within the entity, as appropriate, and applying analytical procedures, and evaluates the evidence obtained.

The procedures performed in a review are substantially less in extent than, and vary in nature from, those performed in an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Accordingly, we do not express an audit opinion on these financial statements.

Conclusion

Based on our review, nothing has come to our attention that causes us to believe that these financial statements do not present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Department of Imaginary Affairs as at December 31, 2018, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.

Other Matter

Comparative information as at and for the year ended December 31, 2017 is unaudited and has not been reported on by independent accountants.

Toronto, Ontario
March 31, 2019

Marinucci & Company
Chartered Accountants
Licensed Public Accountants

Balance Sheet as at December 31, 2018 (unaudited)

ASSETS	2018	2017
Current:		
Cash	\$ 17,786	\$ 1,645
GST/HST recoverable	792	-
Prepaid Expenses	125	-
	<u>\$ 18,703</u>	<u>\$ 1,645</u>
LIABILITIES		
Current:		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 4,158	-
Deferred grant – Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada	12,900	-
	<u>17,058</u>	<u>-</u>
NET ASSETS		
Unrestricted	\$ 1,645	\$ 1,645
	<u>\$ 18,703</u>	<u>\$ 1,645</u>

On behalf of the Board: _____ Director

_____ Director

Statement of Operations and Changes in Net Assets

For the year ended December 31, 2018 (unaudited)

REVENUES	2018	2017
Grant – Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada	\$ 22,367	\$ -
Other public sector grants	-	3,000
Program fees	2,250	13
Donations	1,500	392
Interest	6	1
	<u>\$ 26,123</u>	<u>\$ 3,406</u>
EXPENSES		
Staffing:		
Program manager	\$ 7,560	-
Director of programming	4,304	-
Executive Director	4,640	-
Professional fees	3,700	1,295
Professional development	1,952	-
Computer equipment and supplies	1,044	315
Marketing	122	51
Office and general	2,777	89
Bank charges	24	11
	<u>26,123</u>	<u>1,761</u>
EXCESS OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES	-	1,645
NET ASSETS, beginning of year (Note 1)	<u>1,645</u>	<u>-</u>
NET ASSETS, end of year	<u>\$ 1,645</u>	<u>\$ 1,645</u>

Statement of Cash Flows

For the year ended December 31, 2018 (unaudited)

	2018	2017
Cash generated by (used for):		
OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
Excess of revenues over expenses	\$ -	\$ 1,645
Impact on cash of changes in non-cash working capital items:		
GST/HST recoverable	(792)	-
Prepaid Expenses	(125)	-
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	4,158	-
Deferred grant – Immigration, Refugees and Immigration Canada	12,900	-
	16,141	-
INCREASE IN CASH	16,141	1,645
CASH, beginning of year	\$ 1,645	-
CASH, end of year	\$ 17,786	\$ 1,645

Funders

We gratefully acknowledge the funding for The Stories of Us from:



Immigration, Refugees
and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés
et Citoyenneté Canada

Donors

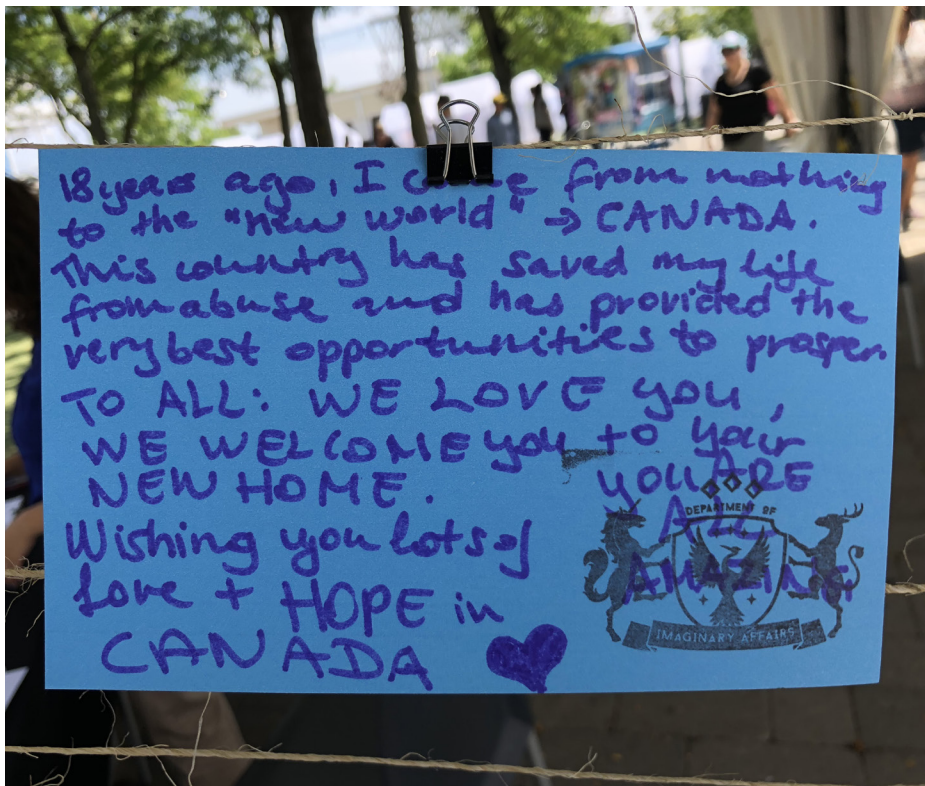
A heartfelt thank you to those who supported us in 2018:

Peter and Jeannette Francey
Jennifer Green
Trevor Haldenby

Volunteers

As we get ourselves up and running, we have had the pleasure of working with some wonderful volunteers who have donated their time to help our cause:

Louisa Yue-Chan
Elisabetta Caiani
Saray Gaitan-Ruiz
Christine De Guzman
Naomi Kostopoulos
Hyung Kyung Son
Nina Okens
Sanket Sinha
Alexandra Tamiko Da Dait



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