

**NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL BEST PRACTICES
FOR
IN-CAREER BUSINESS SKILLS TRAINING FOR
CULTURAL WORKERS**



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Executive Summary

Cultural Careers Council Ontario (CCCO) was assisted by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities to develop a study of successful strategies for in-career entrepreneurial training for cultural workers in jurisdictions outside Ontario. The study followed up on high-level trends identified by previous research, *Enriching our Work in Culture*, in 2008.

The study helped CCCO to identify solutions for common skill challenges in the sector and the best practices they share, including principles of organization, policies, resources and other features. The report has also allowed CCCO to identify proven practices in other jurisdictions that may be applicable or even transferable here.

Features common to the cultural sector (for-profit or non-profit) included:

- the prevalence of self-employment and entrepreneurship
- the broad diversity of artistic disciplines whose practitioners require similar business skills
- financial challenges in a sector dominated by small or micro-businesses
- the lack of coordination in training
- and the changing economic expectations of the sector partly as result of the digital explosion.

Other jurisdictions have pursued similar issues with more coordinated strategies that prioritize entrepreneurial training as a foundation for business development. They have created strong entrepreneurial programs, convergence centres (incubators) and partnerships to address core and critical entrepreneurial skills that are cross-sectoral. These programs target the cultural sector within the context of supportive public policies, coordinated action, and adequate resources. They offer experiential learning opportunities tailored to the needs of the cultural sector.

CCCO reviewed these exemplary practices and models (see Appendix 1). The review identified many similar interests here and potentially transferable models. However, Ontario still lags behind other jurisdictions in the priorities given to entrepreneurial skills for workers that would help realize the province's perception of culture as an economic driver of the future.

The report offers some recommendations for the future.

1. Background

Previous Ontario studies have recognized the importance of professional development as an element of support to culture.

While some individual organizations in Ontario have carried on interesting programs, the sector as a whole and the government struggle with which skill needs to address and how, what are appropriate features for PD programs, and how they are to be resourced.

A 2008 study for CCCO by Ipsos Reid, *Enriching Our Work in Culture* reviewed trends in in-career training for all workers and compared Ontario data to general standards for training as well as to training for cultural workers in some selected jurisdictions. The study identified that Ontario was lagging behind other jurisdictions in its strategies.

In 2009 as part of a comprehensive report called *Skill Development for Cultural Workers*, Cultural Careers Council Ontario (CCCO) took the opportunity to study successful strategies for in-career training in other jurisdictions.

The study helped CCCO to identify solutions for common skill challenges in the sector and the best practices they share, including principles of organization, policies, resources and other features. The report has also allowed CCCO to identify proven practices in other jurisdictions that may be applicable or even transferable here.

1.1 Methodology

CCCO staff conducted both the primary and secondary research, although a bilingual consultant facilitated meetings and the gathering of primary research in Quebec. Both CCCO's outgoing Executive Director, Robert Johnston, and the incoming E.D. Diane Davy, took part in gathering information, as did CCCO's consulting director of programs, Susan Cohen.

Research focussed on jurisdictions that shared sectoral challenges and were similar to Ontario in the way the sector was organized and in their systems and policies.

The process began with a small advisory group that identified key issues in professional development. Common features of the sector were then detailed.

In the next stage, CCCO shared in a consultation about business skill needs for independent artists with representatives from Quebec, Manitoba, Vancouver, Prince Edward Island, Saskatchewan and New Brunswick. This allowed for further detail on skill needs.

CCCO staff identified two provinces – Quebec and Manitoba – as having the most fully elaborated programs to support skill development and visited them to interview key organizations.

CCCO then defined an initial list of best practices. CCCO pursued an online literature search to examine well-established programs and initiatives outside Canada (in Australia, England, Israel and the United States) to determine whether those best practices were shared broadly and to examine their applicability to Ontario. CCCO has developed some recommendations based on the research.

The report and recommendations were shared at Cultural Careers Council Ontario's annual general meeting in April with relevant arts service organizations, unions, trade groups, government representatives and artists. The final report was then posted on the website.

2. Features of the Sector

Our research identified features of the creative cultural sector common to these different jurisdictions and their impact on professional development. Not only are these features shared with Ontario, they are also shared across the continuum of cultural enterprise – from commercial to non-profit.

2.1 The Sector Defined

Convergence Centres: Building Capacity for Innovation, a paper from Toronto-based Artscape in 2009 on creative incubators, described the sector as a “complex aggregation of industries that range from the traditional arts to magazine publishing, digital media to architecture.” (p. 16) The United Nations *Creative Economy Report* (2008) identified 11 different sub sectors. That range of disciplines is a challenge for professional development.

The sector is commonly understood to comprise visual arts and crafts, live performing arts, heritage, the cultural industries (film, television, publishing, sound recording, digital and interactive media) as well as other creative services such as fashion and design.

2.2 Diversity of Skills and Disciplines

Workers in the disciplines and sub-sectors have tended to see their needs as specific to themselves. Professional development has most often been left to the member-based trade associations, unions or arts service organizations which see skills in terms of their own niche, rather than as shared requirements.

2.3 Non-standard Career Paths and Self-employment

The sector is marked by self-employment. More than 75% of artists in Ontario describe themselves as freelancers, self-employed, or entrepreneurs. Half of Canadian cultural workers are considered self-employed and in some disciplines considerably more than that. Such a high degree of self-employment presents a barrier to entering some government-supported business skill development programs in Ontario which are focussed on laid-off workers (eligible through Employment Insurance) or those seeking re-entry into more traditional job markets.

Cultural workers usually have multiple artistic jobs and must often complement artistic jobs with non-artistic work to flesh out an income. Self-employment also means that workers need business and managerial skills to manage their careers. Yet training is often primarily artistic with little emphasis on career planning or business skills.

Workers share a need for similar managerial skills. Yet they rarely access available general business programs unless those programs make a specific effort to reach artists with arts-relevant language and speakers. Artists also indicate they are more

comfortable with and more likely to access specialized services that use the language and the values of arts and culture activity.

Skills themselves are changing as artistic practice changes: collaboration, multidisciplinary art, and cross-sectoral work require different creative skills and managerial requirements. Indeed, skill requirements may change from project to project.

All this means workers need upgrading in both artistic and business skills throughout their career as well as access to lifelong learning at a reasonable cost.

2.4 Financial Marginalization

CCCO's 2008 study confirmed that 60% of organizations in the sector (both in the not-for-profit and for-profit industries) have less than five full-time employees and 30% actually have no full-time employees. There are very few large organizations and only a few considered medium-sized.

Companies or organizations operate as small or micro-enterprises, brought together for specific projects. More than four-fifths of the sector uses teams of contract workers to undertake activities. Support for professional development is not embedded in the value systems or the budgets of individual companies.

It is no wonder that the impact of professional development has fallen on the individual to bear, as the statistics from *Enriching Our Work in Culture* demonstrate. But half of professional artists make less than \$20,000 from their work as artists (Ipsos Reid 2008) and have to supplement their income from their art with other work.

2.5 Training Opportunities Lack Coordination

Business training support and services are less lucrative in this sector compared to other sectors. That may explain why training usually falls to under-resourced arts service organizations amid their many responsibilities. There is little consistency in such training and it also reinforces the existing tendency to discrete and fragmented training. Inevitably, there are many gaps in whatever training exists.

2.6 The Digital Explosion

Promotion, content, production, and consumption are all changed forever by the extraordinary changes in digital technology which are also transforming the business models of the creative sector. New skill sets and knowledge are crucial to competing in this globally-wired world. Digital technology affects both the content of training as well the delivery formats.

2.7 Greater Economic Expectations of the Sector

The province of Ontario has identified the sector's potential to contribute economically. The Ministry of Finance's report *Towards 2025: Assessing Ontario's Long-term Outlook* identified the entertainment and creative cluster as one of three high potential growth areas in the economy. The Martin Prosperity Institute Report for the Ontario government also noted that highly creative industries will also contribute to Ontario's advantage.

Ontario is not alone in seeing big economic potential in the entertainment and creative cluster of industries. Culture is considered one of the fastest-growing industries globally. As the United Nations *Creative Economy Report* (2008) noted:

“The creative industries are among the most dynamic emerging sectors in world trade.”

“... the interface among creativity, culture, economics and technology, as expressed in the ability to create and circulate intellectual capital, has the potential to generate income, jobs and export earnings while at the same time promoting social inclusion, cultural diversity and human development. This is what the emerging creative economy has already begun to do as a leading component of economic growth, employment, trade, innovation, social cohesion in most advanced economies.”

Artists themselves recognize that to successfully do the work they want to do they need business skills. Many studies (including CCCO's own research) point to significant business development needs and skill gaps that keep cultural workers from exploiting their creative and economic potential. However, unlike Ontario, many other jurisdictions have created systematic policies and well-funded programs to support the development of their human capital to facilitate the greater economic potential of the sector.

3. Common Solutions

In its research CCCO found that international jurisdictions are focussing on business skills training (including leadership) so cultural workers can exploit their creativity in these new business models. Appendix 1 is a chart which presents some examples of exemplary In-Career Business Skills Training programs.

CCCO found three common solutions to the training challenges posed by this new economic understanding.

3.1 Entrepreneurial Programs

There are a number of entrepreneurial programs focussed on providing in-career business skills training for cultural workers.

They take different forms, primarily:

- sectoral councils (the United Kingdom, Manitoba, Quebec and Australia)
- private foundations focussing on business skill development (England, Israel, the United States and Australia)
- educational programs (e.g. private schools – the United States and higher education programs – England and Australia)

They are specific to the culture sector, but address core business skills common to a variety of disciplines or sub sectors (although the range of sub sectors may vary).

The programs generally support training for the self-employed as well as for entrepreneurs, contract workers and employees working in the sector.

They recognize that this training must be made available on a continuing basis to individuals to address different needs at different points in a career. Life-long learning is important in the design of training.

Even when the training is associated with higher education, it is never theoretical or focussed solely on the classroom. Instead, the programs offer a number of learning formats and are anchored in practical experience. Learning in the workplace is a very important element.

In all but the completely private schools, the focus is on keeping the costs reasonable so individuals and cultural organizations can access the training. This is usually accomplished through major subsidies.

Training is offered consistently, on a multi-year basis, and usually in a modular fashion. Training may also involve technical assistance programs as well as advisory and counselling services.

Trainers are usually from the sector itself.

A number of these programs recognize regional needs by offering online delivery, regional delivery of training, or travel support for participants.

3.2 Convergence Centres/Incubators

A number of jurisdictions have created facility-based programs that support the start-up and early-stage development of entrepreneurial enterprises in culture.

They are specific to culture and offer an array of business support services, resources (technical and other), marketing and showcasing opportunities, networking and business skill development programs.

Professional development is an essential part of the program through on-site lecture series, training programs such as workshops or seminars, networking opportunities for the exchange of knowledge and information, and resource centres.

3.3 Partnerships

Collaborations are an important theme underlying the activity described above. But a number of programs thrive because of significant partnerships directed towards a shared purpose.

Here are some examples:

- The establishment of the Conseil québécois des ressources humaines en culture (CQRHC) flows from a signed agreement between the Ministère de la culture et des communications and Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité Social that recognized the uniqueness of business conditions in the cultural sector and the need to develop training in response to that
- The Enterprise Centre for the Creative Arts in England exists to serve the business development needs of graduates of six arts colleges (The University of the Arts – London)
- LINC (Levering Investments in Creativity), an initiative of the Ford Foundation in the U.S., has created a nation-wide partnership of 15 communities to address issues affecting artists, including business training

3.4 Key Features

Every one of these initiatives **targets the cultural sector** with programs specific to its needs, language and value systems. There are often initiatives targeting specific sub sectors and even specific communities within the sub sectors:

- sectoral councils address the needs of a range of sub sectors
 - Arts and Cultural Industries Manitoba, known as ACI Manitoba, serves individuals from Heritage, Music and Sound, Writing and Publishing, Live Performing Arts, Film and Video, Graphic Design, Crafts, Visual Arts, New

Media and Broadcasting while Film Training Manitoba, Music Manitoba and New Media Manitoba are specific to the needs of their constituencies;

- Quebec groups partner on targeting youth (Outiller la relève artistique Montréalaise); some ACI programs target Aboriginal business skills
- Kennedy Center mentorship programs target culturally-specific companies
- The National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA) in the U.K. developed innovative business programs for Manchester and Scotland

The programs focus on **experiential learning** in a range of learning formats:

- mentorships
- internships
- apprenticeships
- networks
- work placements
- training related to specific industries (e.g. union certifications)

This also highlights the importance of social networks to the creative sector.

Most of these programs result from clear **public or foundation policies and plans** to affect the well being and economic potential of the sector through strategic action and directed funding. For example:

- Quebec and Manitoba both have policies to support sectoral councils as the best way to promote skill needs and business development
- NESTA is a foundation with a large-scale endowment whose goal is to make the U.K. more innovative (the creative industries are core to its mandate)
- Agencies such as Cultural Industries Development Agency (CIDA) in the U.K. have been established by local or regional governments to animate business development and professional development

In whatever form, these programs have a similar intent – to galvanize entrepreneurial growth in the creative economy.

4. Key Best Practices

4.1 Centralized Hub

Implementation of professional development strategies requires a centralized hub whose focus is directly on training; it provides a centre of activity, takes responsibility for the training concerns of a community, coordinates, strategizes, provides overviews and advocates as well as developing and delivering training programs. In some jurisdictions this falls to a sectoral council, in others to a foundation.

In a number of jurisdictions, there are multiple drivers, each with a different angle on training or a focus on a particular niche.

4.2 Focus on Common and Critical Skills that Cross Disciplines and are Adapted to the Sector

Business skills training usually crosses discipline lines to create synergies and efficiencies.

Although it is common to think of a division between the needs of cultural industry media and more traditional disciplines, the divisions are often not that simple. Skillset is the U.K. sectoral council for creative media – animation, computer games, facilities (technical services to creative media) film, television, photo imaging and publishing – but it also includes fashion and textile and does not cover music and sound recording. Creative and Skills is the U.K. sectoral council for crafts, heritage, literature, performing arts and the visual arts yet it also covers design and music and sound recording. ACI Manitoba covers all the sub sectors. NESTA focuses on the creative industries but describes them as digital, fashion games, film and the live arts while QUT Creative Enterprise Australia focuses on fashion and design, new media, film, television and music. The Clore Leadership Programme (U.K.) embraces visual and performing arts, film, heritage, museums and archives, creative industries and cultural policy and administration. Creative Industries Skills Council (Australia) in Queensland covers the arts, entertainment, fashion, furniture design, graphic arts, printing and other industries like Millinery, Indigenous Arts, and Journalism.

Regardless of the focus, the training recognizes that different disciplines require common skills and essential knowledge such as:

- policy, rights and regulatory frameworks
- trends and changing business and professional models
- leadership and change management skills
- marketing research, planning and implementation
- product development
- project and production management
- business and financial literacy (structures, accounting, licensing, etc.)

- intra-personal skills (self-analysis, problem-solving, time management, etc.)
- inter-personal skills (delegating, writing and presentation, team-building, etc.)

Curriculum is adapted to the sector, using its language and values in case studies drawn from the sector.

Usually training is delivered by experts from the sector itself. Where outside instructors or counsellors are used, training those trainers so that they understand the features of the sector becomes important. For example, CQRHC arranges training for counsellors in employment agencies who support artists in transition.

In some cases, there are direct relationships between standardized workforce skills training and market/workplace skill needs. As one example, Film Training Manitoba offers programs in collaboration with unions that lead to certification. Many organizations offer advice on curriculum development, qualifications and standards – for example, England’s Skillset develops and maintains national occupational standards for all occupations across the creative media.

Programs acknowledge that workers need access to continuous upgrading throughout their career. For example, Skillset offers a continuum of training for those entering the field to senior workers who need upgrading. All programs, whether they support the provider or the individual, recognize the self-employment challenges of the sector.

The training offered represents the best response possible to the particular cultural workforce issues and attitudes. For example, CQRHC supports a training plan developed by each of its member associations to cover all career levels but also works with employment agencies to provide transition support for experienced cultural workers from whatever field. Israel Cultural Excellence Foundation selects individual artists with potential and creates individual development plans customized to their needs; all the plans include shared business training, individual business mentoring and community work.

4.3 Supportive Government Policy

The relationship between government strategy and focus on cultural entrepreneurship is very strong. A number of governments directly intervene with funding to promote, advocate and develop entrepreneurial programs.

A sign of the priority given by these governments is that support is not isolated in one department or Ministry. For example, in Manitoba, ACI receives funding from four government departments: Advanced Education and Literacy; Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade; Culture, Heritage, Tourism and Sport; and Education, Citizenship and Youth. Cultural Industries Development Agency (CIDA) is supported by the Arts Council of England, the London boroughs of Tower Hamlets, Hackney and Newham and the London Development Agency, among others.

Resources are provided on an ongoing basis to these agencies, allowing for long-term strategic building of training programs in response to assessed gaps, and development and continuous nurturing of key partnerships.

Program funding is directed towards both the individuals and the training provider. These resources also allow for programs to be offered to the community for very reasonable fees, or at steep discounts.

Creative and Cultural Skills (U.K. sectoral council) offers government-funded and industry-approved apprenticeships leading to vocational qualifications in:

- Live events and promotion
- Music business (recording Industry)
- Technical theatre (rigging, lighting and sound)
- Costumes and wardrobe
- Cultural and Heritage Venue Operations
- Community Arts Management

Queensland Australia's Creative Industry Skills Council programs feed directly in the Queensland government's skills strategy.

4.4 Flexible Delivery Formats with a Focus on Experiential Learning

The variety of learning formats is wide but all of them reflect in some way the importance the sector attaches to learning through social networks and from experience. Classroom-based learning exists but it is always accompanied in some way by some combination of the following:

- mentoring (online and live)
- online networks
- on site networks
- business advisors
- HR counsellors
- internships
- vocational training
- apprenticeships
- work placements
- peer learning
- resource centres
- lecture series
- workshops and seminars
- residencies
- podcasts
- coaching

Access to relevant training is important. Programs experiment with both online and live training and use both formats to complement each other. The Creative Capital Foundation focuses on making its skill-building programs accessible for regional artistic

communities while the Kennedy Center (in Washington D.C.) takes advantage of its experienced administrators to mentor (online and in person) cultural administrators from local communities, diverse communities, other regions and even other countries.

Peer instructors and sector-generated case studies are key to the different curricula.

4.5 Partnerships and Collaborations

Partnerships and collaborations play a fundamental role in the success of these different programs.

The partnerships may be intra-governmental (already described above), inter-governmental or cross-sectoral. For example, California's Center for Cultural Innovation (CCI) was commissioned by the city of San José to explore needs for its artists, devise strategies for the future and pilot initial services. Funding for CCI's program in Sacramento results from partnering with non-arts foundations – the Sacramento Region Community Foundation and the Nonprofit Resource Center of Sacramento.

Partnerships with academic institutions offer excellent support in a variety of ways. For example, ACI Manitoba members can access discounts for training offered by the Cultural Management Program in Continuing Education at the University of Winnipeg. London's University of the Arts provides guidance and business skills training from its faculty, among others, to graduates who are self-employed. The Queensland University of Technology (QUT) created an incubator for emerging business in film, television, music, design and new media; there is a close relationship with the QUT faculty through seminars, workshops, advice and access to all the research necessary. The research funded by NESTA and QUT raises the profile of the sector and provides evidence-based case studies that are used in advocacy.

NESTA works directly in partnership with different governments (e.g. city of Manchester and the government of Scotland) to develop creative enterprise training schemes. In other cases, NESTA brings together cross-sectoral teams which embrace arts, business, academia, industry and governments.

Incubators or convergence centres are built on the principle of collaboration, networking and the exchange of knowledge among different disciplines and industries.

This emphasis on collaborations and partnerships are consistent with the creative sector's own focus on collaboration, team work and social networks of various kinds.

5. Applicability to Ontario

There is no doubt that conditions in Ontario exist to create that synergy of creativity, business skill training and entrepreneurship that could propel the creative economy forward, but there is as yet nothing significant to turn around what Ipsos Reid identified as a “weak culture of human resources.”

Cross-sectoral organizations such as Cultural Careers Council Ontario have begun to create cross-disciplinary entrepreneurial programs and networks to bring attention to business training and workforce issues. Individual arts service organizations, trade associations and some cultural organizations are developing business skill training programs of genuine strength (e.g. Women in Film and Television , the Ontario Museum Association, Magazines Canada) but these are dedicated to their memberships or constituencies.

There is a growing interest in the whole area of human resources. The Metcalf Foundation, one of the few arts-relevant foundations in Ontario, is focussing on the renewal of the leadership of non-profit organizations, including cultural bodies. The Ontario Arts Council and the Ontario Media Development Corporation allow for some business skills training in their research, technical assistance and granting programs.

The importance of Artscape’s projects and other Toronto-based private companies to define creative zones that combine entrepreneurial enterprises, residential holdings, technology centres and networks cannot be underestimated. Cultural incubators are also beginning to be developed outside of Toronto.

The Ministry of Culture has identified professional development as an important element of a healthy culture in its Status of the Artist legislation. Its assistance to business of art forums in some towns and its support of municipal cultural planning initiatives have begun to identify potential partners for entrepreneurial training for cultural workers. The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities has supported some business-skill development projects (including this one). Local business development centres are beginning to show an interest in cultural enterprises as part of the economic potential of the province.

But these are all still weak and fragmented efforts. As the Artscape report on convergence centres (2009) noted, there is “significant unmet demand for varying levels of business development support.”

Unlike other jurisdictions, the Ontario Government’s stated view of the economic potential of the creative sector is at odds with its funding priorities and there seems little or no opportunity for cross-department collaboration and attention to the needs of cultural entrepreneurs.

6. Recommendations

This report on best practices for in-career business skills training in other jurisdictions raises a number of challenges for the sector in Ontario if it aims to successfully close the gap between its belief in the potential economic importance of the sector and the skills of cultural workers to realize that potential.

The challenges include:

- appropriate coordination within the sector and among various government departments
- raising the profile of the sector and its entrepreneurial skill needs within government
- and raising the profile of business skills professional development within the sector itself and within the broad community

Other jurisdictions have answered these challenges through a set of best practices they share. These best practices address the unique features of the cultural sector and give priority to entrepreneurial training through coordinated strategies within governments and within the sector.

Recommendations flow from these challenges and are made to both the Ontario Government and to Cultural Careers Council itself, as the largest cross-sectoral organization concerned with skill development.

In order to close the gap between the economic potential of the sector and the skills of cultural workers to realize that potential, it is recommended:

1. That the Ontario Government embrace entrepreneurial training for the cultural sector as a priority in its stated perception of culture as a major economic driver by providing enhanced and consistent financial support through those organizations whose mandate is to provide that training.
2. That the Ontario Government develop a coordinated and collaborative strategy across various Ministries concerned with entrepreneurial initiatives that will target the cultural sector's entrepreneurial skill needs.
3. That the Ontario Government recognize the importance of centralized entrepreneurial training and knowledge through support for Cultural Careers Council Ontario and its members
 - to develop and present the case for business skills training to the sector and to the public
 - to study entrepreneurial training needs with appropriate partners and implement cross-sectoral strategies as required
 - to build a network of shared knowledge around entrepreneurial training requirements and best practices

4. That Cultural Careers Council Ontario, in partnership with its members, should lead the development and delivery of a regular regular cultural workforce summit to highlight trends, best practices, challenges and opportunities for relevant stakeholders.
5. That Cultural Careers Council Ontario should bring together a working group with an interest in business skills training for culture to explore shared interests, cross-sectoral strategies and provincial and national research in this area.
6. That Cultural Careers Council Ontario should develop a strategic communications program of public education on the importance of entrepreneurial training
 - working with its partners in the culture sector to highlight the need to prioritize this training in budgets, policies and planning
 - working with its partners in the government to strengthen the relationship between Ontario's perception of the economic importance of the sector and its strategies and allocation of resources
 - working with partners from business, education and labour in the public community to position the sector's potential as an economic driver with the broad community