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Cultural Careers Council Ontario
Conseil des carrières culturelles de l'Ontario

**REPORT ON TRAINING NEEDS AND
RESOURCES
FOR ONTARIO'S CULTURAL SECTOR**

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Report on Training Needs and Resources for Ontario's Cultural Sector

Report for Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (Sectoral Initiatives Fund) and Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSD)

Executive Summary

The cultural sector in Ontario is a large (over 291,000 workers) and a complex source of job opportunities in the province. A skilled workforce is critical to its continued growth. The sector includes business corporations as well as not-for-profit organizations, small, mid-scale and big companies with substantial numbers of both employees and/or contract workers, projects that involve freelance cultural professionals as well as one-person practices; at any moment, half the sector is self-employed.

Cultural Careers Council Ontario (CCCO) is a cross-sectoral cultural human resource organization, the only one of its kind in Ontario, one of only three in Canada. It represents the interests of performing arts (theatre, music, dance and opera), visual arts, crafts and design, writing and publishing, media arts (film, video, audio, new media) as well as museums, heritage and libraries. CCCO works closely with community partners in its work. All cultural sub sectors are represented through its board membership.

CCCO's focus is on in-career training to help arts and culture professionals enhance their existing skills and acquire new ones. Previous CCCO reports had identified the challenges and obstacles to career progress and transition resulting from either inadequate in-career training or lack of access to training. For example, a 2002 study by CCCO (*Consultations about Human Resources Needs in the Cultural Sector*) identified the following challenges to the sector:

- A serious lack of qualified and experienced managers and administrators
- A lack of skills in self-management that is significant, given the prevalence of self-employment in the sector
- A lack of understanding of and a base of knowledge in the field of Human Resources
- Inadequate coordination of information about training resources and how to access them

Since March 2004 CCCO has been engaged in a study to determine skill gaps in the cultural sector and to plan purposefully and efficiently for its own role in meeting those needs. These gaps must be addressed in any life-long professional development strategy for cultural workers.

The study took place in 3 phases:

1. March 2004 – January 2005 (funded by Ministry of Culture)
2. February 2005 – October 2005 (funded by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and Human Resources and Social Development Canada)

3. March 2005 – April 2006 (funded by the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities and Human Resources and Social Development Canada)

Over that period, CCCO organized a highly consultative and practical process to determine and meet the needs of the community. The study used various methodologies – individual interviews, surveys, focus groups and a series of pilot projects that tested learning strategies – to arrive at final recommendations.

This highly consultative process had very positive results.

Cultural sub sectors and arts disciplines generally see themselves as isolated from each other. CCCO approached its work from a multidisciplinary perspective, bringing together various sub sectors into workshops and meetings so that they could see the similarities in issues, rather than the differences. Evaluations throughout showed the values of bringing people together into larger groups; these included networking as well as efficiencies of costs.

In addition, the study clarified that many cultural workers move across the continuum of employment: at any given moment in a cultural career, a worker may be an employee of others, an employer of others, or an independent contractor. Whatever their status, they will ultimately need the same range of skills to manage their careers.

The large numbers of organizations and individuals consulted and the variety of pilot projects allowed for strong participation by workers which is important to the cultural community. They could see results of activities and there was considerable ‘buy-in’ from the beginning. Indeed, numerous specific partnerships were created to undertake the various pilots.

The study prioritized significant skill gaps in the community which were relevant to CCCO’s mandate. The most important was in the area of Human Resources where CCCO can take a major leadership role. Various activities and pilots strengthened that role, and there are a series of further recommendations in this area. The next skill gaps where CCCO can contribute are Marketing and Income Generation. The fourth major gap is in the skills of executive directors of arts service associations; these organizations group cultural organizations or individual cultural workers to provide information, services, advocacy and/or skill development. Finally, CCCO can organize specific coaching in adult education instructional methods for industry experts who may occasionally be teaching others in the sub sectors.

In other skill sets, CCCO can support the community best through identifying and undertaking important research on human resources, communicating and coordinating information, facilitating networking, and brokering outside partnerships and relationships. The study makes a series of recommendations for next steps in different areas.

Finally, a key recommendation of this report is for a study on professional development issues in Ontario's whole cultural sector. The absence of such research makes it difficult to understand how much professional development currently happens in Ontario and where, what individuals and organizations spend or should spend on skill development and how it furthers or hinders their careers, the impact of skill gaps on the cultural economy, what accepted international standards there are and how close or far Ontario is from such standards, etc.

A. Phase One

Phase One approached skills from a comprehensive perspective – what skills are common to all working cultural professionals and what are the differences in skills required for the employed and the self-employed.

CCCO developed a grid of 10 essential skill areas – Leadership, Financial, Making Teams More Effective, Developing the Organization, Personal and Communication Skills, Marketing Skills, Income Generation, Project Management, Program Evaluation, and Information Systems and Technology. The skill areas ran in parallel for both employed and self-employed workers, changing language and emphasis as it appeared necessary for the particular audience. For example, Career Management was the comparable category to Leadership, and Developing Your Project substituted for Developing Your Organization. (See Skill Grids – Appendix A)

The project also developed a list of possible learning formats – short courses (1-5 days), e-learning (courses and tools at home or office), experiential learning (coaching, mentoring, apprenticeships or internships), and customized learning.

CCCO then sent a survey to 132 leaders in the cultural sector to rank preferred learning formats, as well as most needed skills. The survey was followed up by 23 key information interviews.

Respondents were asked to rank most needed skills within selected areas – Leadership, Developing Your Organization, and Personal and Communication Skills; the comparable areas for the self-employed worker were Managing Your Career, Developing Your Project and Personal and Communication Skills. These specific skills were prioritized as most needed: leadership, using volunteers effectively, negotiating (as an interpersonal skill, as opposed to labour relations) and career planning. However, it should be emphasized that the final ranking was extremely close, with top priorities separated only minimally from the others.

The study concluded that **short courses** and **experiential learning** were the preferred learning formats. These brought people together in **relationships**, could be given by **seasoned professionals** from the industry, and would be **accessible** within a working day; the information should be specific and relevant, and could be applied to their working life. The study also noted an increasing interest in all generations in **using the internet to find short bits of information** such as ‘just-in-time’ materials and samples.

Findings from the survey and the interviews showed that, unlike other sectors, the cultural sector has few opportunities for professional development. For example, there are few private consultants or companies specializing in training. Instead, the arts and culture sector is dependent on its arts service associations, its trade associations, or unions. While there is a growing concern for professional development, the study

showed some disciplines are better served than others, but even within relatively well-served areas, study opportunities are inconsistent and sporadic.

There is also little available or easily accessible information about possible professional development opportunities, making it difficult to access the little training that exists. Information from other non-profit or profit resources is useful, but often difficult to adapt to specific arts and culture disciplines; in some cases the language is off-putting to a sector with a bias against bureaucracy.

The study recommended different strategies for different skills. A number of cultural organizations and educational institutions are trying to address leadership and career planning. The biggest gap in these two areas was in information. The study recommended having a central website to provide needed information at the fingertips of managers with lists of Canadian or Ontario information on particular topics, and bringing people together to let them know what is going on in other cultural sub sectors. The study therefore recommended communication strategies around these areas.

The two other skills required different strategies. Negotiating is very much an interpersonal skill best taught in a live setting, so the study suggested creation of short professional development workshops in partnership with arts service organizations or other cultural groups.

The study recommended that CCCO make opportunities to promote the few culture-specific resources in volunteer management, often unknown outside their originating organizations, and to ensure that volunteer management is on the agenda in other learning opportunities.

B. Phase Two

The next phase reviewed the rest of the skill sets – Financial, Making Teams More Effective, Marketing, Income Generation, Project Management, Program Evaluation and Information Systems and Technology to determine learning opportunities, gaps and priorities.

This time the study focussed on Ontario-based in-career cultural learning opportunities. Full-time study (such as MBA programs) and non-cultural programs were not listed, as the previous study had shown they were not as directly useful to the working professional.

In addition to information interviews, the study used multidisciplinary focus groups to determine the final list of gaps and priorities in skill sets. (For a list of all those consulted throughout the project see Appendix B)

The participants included:

Managers

- an experienced education/outreach director of a large theatre

- a young general manager of a well known arts education theatre company
- a young manager of a long-established dance company
- two freelance arts administrators (one in visual arts; the second, in commercial television and film)
- the senior manager of a provincial performing arts service organization

Artists

- a visual artist who also works for an ASO
- a filmmaker associated with an experimental film festival
- an actor who also works for training program
- a violinist who is also a composer, grad student and teacher
- a freelance curator who also works as an administrator
- a freelance wardrobe assistant on films who is also a photographer
- a student filmmaker who has worked as a volunteer and intern in the film industry, gaining entry-level experience.

The groups reached the same general conclusions as in Phase One about the needs for communication, more experiential programs and short-term courses.

They added some new observations to the mix. For example, they noted that **most people in culture make frequent transitions between sub sectors and disciplines as well as between the commercial and not-for-profit ends of the culture spectrum.** Skill development programs could potentially be multidisciplinary as many skills were transferable between arts and culture disciplines. **With that in mind, they agreed that the two parallel skill grids should be combined into one.**

They also noted with irony that **executive directors of arts service associations (ASOs)** have responsibility for professional development and advocacy in their fields, but **have no professional development opportunities of their own.** Once again, there is a bias against conventional organizations and against the language and information that could be found through the Canadian Society of Executive Directors.

Of the seven remaining skill sets – Financial, Human Resources, Marketing, Income Generation, Project Management, Program Evaluation, Information Systems and Technology, they came to these priorities:

1. Information Systems was considered a low priority. Many systems are discipline-specific or job-specific; those which are administrative can be learned through business seminars or online tutorials;
2. Project Management and Program Evaluation are important, but participants felt that initially they could be dealt with through templates and models made available online. They were not as high a priority as other skill areas.
3. Financial skills, especially those dealing with pricing of product and financial planning for the future, were given high priority; participants noted that most arts training does not equip individuals for budgeting and for individual financial planning;

4. Human Resources (Making Your Team More Effective) was a complete blank for many participants whether in organizations or self-employed. They acknowledged that this is an enormous gap in the cultural sector. Even individual artists noted that coaching and mentoring, interviewing and auditioning, contracting, recruitment and training were required skills. Those coming from organizations felt the whole area was one that needed to be addressed. Rarely do arts service organizations offer HR workshops or courses.
5. Both Marketing and Income Generation were considered high priorities because of the financial marginalization of most artists and artistic organizations. Except for full-time business or administration programs or occasional online courses, only CCCO's Summer Institute (a component of its Income Managers Program) offers specific training for working professionals in marketing and fundraising. Participants wanted to see it made accessible to more people; they also suggested that entrepreneurial skills (the engaging of allies, partners and communities in work) should also be added to this list.

The **highest priorities for both freelance and employed workers** were:

- Financial skills (especially accounting, taxation and individual financial planning)
- Human Resources (including issues that are specific to self-employment status)
- Marketing and Income Generation (expanded with entrepreneurial skills)

Quizzed on CCCO's current role, the participants agreed that the job board was well used and well regarded and they urged **CCCO, as the only cross-discipline sectoral body in Ontario dealing with cultural human resources, to take a strong leadership role in the HR area.**

CCCO took these priorities and conclusions which were congruent with those of Phase One and brought them all forward.

C. Phase Three

In Phase Three, CCCO developed pilot projects to test different learning strategies to address the skill gaps. A seven-person committee included representation from educational programs, unions, arts service organizations, performing arts and multidisciplinary presentation programs, commercial media arts and publishing helped to provide feedback on the projects.

The committee noted that the comprehensive **skill grid had to encompass Entrepreneurial and Artistic skills.** The committee also noted that **Ontario lags behind other jurisdictions in providing business skills and business planning services to new and developing cultural organizations.** The need for business skills is one of the results of the changes in the economy and in technology. There is a move towards increased entrepreneurialism along with greater potential for self-marketing in a global marketplace and convergence of arts forms and distribution vehicles.

Regarding CCCO's role, they emphasized the notion of limits to inform CCCO's work – don't be all things to all people, don't replicate activities but refer people to existing resources, and work with existing and potential partners in the community to maximize benefits. They agreed that many skills are transferable and can be taught in cross-disciplinary context. They also suggested that information provided by CCCO should be vetted and contextualized in some way.

In this phase CCCO tested different learning strategies in three areas: Communication Strategies (including online resources), Professional Development Strategies, and Strategies for Specially Targeted Skill Gaps. (For summaries of specific pilot projects, see Appendix C).

The pilot projects allowed CCCO to assess:

- Whether the learning strategies were reasonable and sustainable with the limitations of CCCO resources and manpower
- Whether they were specific to particular disciplines or could be offered in a multidisciplinary context
- Whether there was an interest in the community for skill development in these areas
- Whether there were partners in the community that could share and participate in programs
- Whether there were potential resources and trainers in the community with information appropriate to cultural needs.

D. Observations from Pilot Projects

D. 1 Communications Strategies (Including Online Resources)

1. Website:

CCCO found only one existing resource that had potential for delivering skill development resources to the whole cultural community: The Cultural Management Portal, developed for its membership by the Ontario Museum Association,. The site contains a rich inventory of study opportunities and model resources for every skill needed in cultural management. Many learning opportunities were in ongoing university and college programs throughout the entire province and many of these were not specific to culture. In all, there were 6,000 links to be updated regularly. CCCO reviewed the site with the possibility of assuming it.

The study felt the usefulness of this portal was offset by the staff and financial resources necessary to maintain it. A specific **website more focussed on the key skill gaps closest to the human resources mandate of CCCO was actually more reasonable for its purposes and resources.** Relatively easy maintenance, referral to information from community partners, and easy-to-use practicality were the key principles.

CCCO then instituted a first-stage redesign of its own website. The redesign focused on CCCO's role in job search, career development and Human Resources. It removed little used information and materials oriented to pre-professionals (undergrad and high school students) and built on the best used features of the current website – its current HR Tools Series (2,000 hits a month) and its job board (3 million hits a month).

The revised site includes separate pages to address the concerns raised in the previous phases of the study. There is a new user-friendly Information Section which promotes CCCO's own publications and its HR Tools Series. The section also facilitates sharing and distribution of skill development publications and materials produced by other cultural organizations in Ontario. (The emphasis is on Ontario-based and Canadian resources specific to culture.) These include skill manuals and online workbooks on professional activities such as theatre publicity, running a dance business, stage management, artist contracting, etc. Other sections emphasize career development by promoting skill development courses and events. (**Appendix F:-**Bulletin launching revised WorkinCulture Website)

CCCO also has a revised links section with new categories – Human Resources, Management, Health and Safety, Job Search Resources and Research and Information Resources. These links add a whole new type of information to the cultural community by referring to sites, organizations and government bodies that offer HR services or information; most are specific to culture, some have information useful to cultural HR.

All materials and information have been reviewed and vetted by CCCO staff as useful for the community; where possible, there is some contextual information to make it easy for users. In some cases, CCCO asked outside experts to assess material to determine its usefulness for CCCO site visitors.

2. Online Resources

Understanding and integrating appropriate HR skills and practices is part of the long-term answer to the cultural community's challenges. Without that, the sector is characterized by burnout and high turnover which in turn

- affects the ability to realize strategic plans or develop new resources
- encourages clashes and conflicts among artists, managers and boards of directors over issues affecting human resources
- results in frequent recruiting which is wasteful of finances and human resources, etc.

Some individual arts disciplines in Ontario are beginning to show an interest in HR, led by Professional Association of Canadian Theatres (PACT) which has a book specific to its members, the Ontario Museum Association which has relevant publications and online materials, and CAPACOA which is developing a model HR policy manual just for arts presenters. However, the Tips & Templates section on CCCO's revised site is the **first inventory of HR cultural materials** available online to the **whole** cultural community.

This important addition offers easy to use ‘just-in-time’ HR information such as tips, checklists, samples and guidelines. Since the cultural community is put off by HR language and non-cultural examples, the goal of this section is to offer **samples provided by cultural community peers.**

At the moment most material in this section is taken from CCCO’s *HR Tools Series*. These nine books, developed in cooperation with community organizations and Ottawa’s Cultural Human Resources Council, are available for downloading electronically from CCCO’s website. The publications were conceived as books and cover some key HR topics from a cultural perspective. Feedback indicated that, in their present form, the information can be hard to find, and so the Tips & Templates section has highlighted helpful checklists, guidelines or other short bites of information from the manuals.

There are still a number of changes and additions necessary to make the information on the website wide-ranging and helpful.

In order to help workers make better use of the booklets, CCCO will **need to provide an online index to content** in the current booklets.

As well, the first books produced cover primarily the staffing process and a few aspects of people management. To be an effective HR resource for the cultural community, the Tips & Templates section should also cover

- training and development
- compensation
- other aspects of people and workplace management such as work-life balance, health and safety, recognition and diversity.

In order to give the section greater breadth, CCCO will need to **methodically solicit, vet and list sample HR materials from other cultural community organizations and flesh out the inventory of resources with pertinent cultural examples on the HR topics above.**

Today’s uncertain marketplace and the global implications of business are challenging all sectors. One consequence, as business and organizational scholars have documented, is the “reconsideration of existing forms of organizations and, in particular, a shift away from hierarchy and vertical integration towards more flexible network forms of organization”. In dynamic network organizations, “a central core ... draws upon the services of different specialists as and when productive demands dictate”; and reconstitutes the same creative team on a recurring basis. Some have called these types of networks “latent organizations” in that they have track records of working together, have ongoing relationships, and can deliver consistency in product. A sense of partnership and trust is crucial to making these “latent” organizations work. (Starkey, Barnatt, Tempest, *Organizational Science*, vol. 11, No. 3, May-June 2000)

Cultural groups have been working this way for years. Self-employed workers make up the majority in theatre, dance, crafts, film, some of the visual arts and music. In these artistic situations an artistic head or producer must assemble a team of other artists to put

on projects, exhibitions, or make a film, put on a concert or create choreography. Among younger generations, many working in new art forms, this is the preferred way of working. The *HR Tools* were originally addressed to managers of small and mid-size organizations of 5 – 20 people. **Research to enlarge the inventory in the Tips & Templates section should take into account the HR skills needed for entrepreneurialism in arts and culture.**

As cultural experts in HR begin to emerge, CCCO should consider **developing online interactive opportunities for those experts to answer questions from workers.** This would also serve to increase the base of knowledge in the cultural community.. **This could become an important service of CCCO and should be planned in partnership with existing managerial and consulting organizations such as the Association of Cultural Executives and educational institutions such as the Centre for Cultural Management which is developing a consultant data base.**

RECOMMENDATION 1

Cultural Careers Council Ontario should develop an online index for its HR tools series and any other CCCO publications. This will make it easier for online users to find information.

RECOMENDATION #2

CCCO should expand its online inventory of HR resources (Tips & Templates) with sample materials from the cultural community relevant to a greater range of HR topics, including recruiting and staffing, compensation, training and development, health and safety, recognition, diversity and the work-life balance. Research to enlarge the inventory in the Tips & Templates section should also cover the HR skills needed for entrepreneurialism in arts and culture.

RECOMMENDATION #3

CCCO should plan and test an opportunity for cultural workers to question experts in HR issues. By promoting the questions and answers on its website, CCCO can expand the HR knowledge of workers in the sector. This initiative should be planned with such industry bodies as the Association of Cultural Executives and/or educational programs such as the Centre for Cultural Management or the Humber College School of Arts Administration. This may also be an opportunity for CCCO to partner with groups from outside the sector such as the Human Resources Professionals Association of Ontario.

D. 2 Professional Development Opportunities

The pilot projects included four different professional development opportunities which were alternative learning strategies.

The cultural sector has enormous variety and range – including a diversity of workers, complex and very individualized jobs, and many different art forms and practices even within a single sub sector. These pilot projects helped CCCO to determine, from

amongst that great variety, interest in skill development topics, potential partners in the community, industry experts who could deliver relevant learning content to a range of sub sectors and disciplines, and alternative learning formats which individuals would find accessible and useful.

The pilot projects were two workshops on skill issues, a speaker program on HR, and the HR Swap Meet (a casual round robin with industry experts on different subjects).

1. Workshops:

CCCO facilitated two specific workshops that addressed self-management and business skills important for independent workers: one was on Pricing and Negotiating, and the other was on the People to People Skills of the Job Search (interviewing and networking).

The one-day workshops enlisted instructors working in culture with known reputations. As pilot projects, both were deliberately kept accessible: one was free; the other involved a small fee of \$25 for the day. (Appendix D – Workshops - Promotion and Materials)

CCCO found 7 arts organizations interested in being partners:

- Two art service organizations from theatre and visual arts – Theatre Ontario and CARFAC-Ontario
- An administrative resource organization for dance – Dance Umbrella of Ontario
- One post-professional training facility for theatre actors and directors – Equity Showcase
- A performing arts promotion and service body – Toronto Alliance for the Performing Arts
- An organization providing services and professional development in new media technical skills – Liaison of Independent Filmmakers
- An organization providing technical and business skills for women in the film and television sub sector – Women in Film and Television – Toronto.

Some of these are membership organizations, others provide services for fees; each, however, has a direct and clear constituency and an interest in the professional development of their artists. As partners, they came to planning meetings, promoted the workshops directly to their communities, took registrations and/or attended the workshops.

Their reasons for taking part showed that offering the **workshops added value to their regular programming** on behalf of the artists they represented:

- “We only offer technical workshops but our members need these personal skills as well in their careers” (LIFT)
- “We offer a booklet on a guide to negotiating but our members need to practice the skill too” (CARFAC)
- “We do not have a large enough group to be able to afford workshops on this topic” (DUO)

- “Our members have told us they want this type of skill development, but we are not really a professional development organization” (TAPA)

Both workshops attracted participants from several arts areas (film, theatre, visual arts and/or dance) and several partnering organizations. The workshops were geared to emerging and mid-career artists, but one-third of attendance at both workshops came from artists who had been working 10 years and more in culture. In addition, the evaluation for the People-to-People Skills workshops showed that more than half were self-employed. Several participants described themselves as administrators as well as artists.

The evaluation asked about the value of cross-disciplinary workshops. There is a simple cost-efficiency factor to multidisciplinary events: by appealing to a wider number of sub sectors, attendance can increase, improving revenues and permitting more consistency in programming. **But participant evaluations also supported the concept of the multidisciplinary format as helpful in building confidence, breaking down isolation and allowing for networking, clarification of concepts and problem-solving;** there were also occasional comments that the format would benefit by allowing for break-out groups focusing on one area for more detailed information.

Multidisciplinary formats have a number of benefits. They

- expand the networking possibilities which are important aspect to successful professional development;
- expand the skill development opportunities within any particular community
- relieve the organizing burden of the partners
- encourage the possibility of finding in-kind services such as promotion or donated room space.

Through written evaluations, participants suggested both workshops should be held again. Participants said they would encourage other colleagues to attend.

RECOMMENDATION #4

CCCO should communicate the value and experience of multidisciplinary events to others offering professional development opportunities in culture; this may encourage others to offer workshops on transferable skills to cultural workers outside their particular art forms.

Both workshops offered industry instructors and guests. Evaluations indicated that this was an important and appreciated feature of the workshops – seasoned cultural professionals sharing their expertise.

CCCO observers and one of the participants noted that **the downside of using industry instructors: they do not have training in teaching methodology or in educating adult learners.** This can lead to problems in conveying information clearly. This is an issue that has to be addressed when cultural experts are given this opportunity.

Industry instructors need to work with specialists in adult education methods who can coach them through the potential challenges of teaching. This is a valuable service that CCCO could provide through a workshop on adult education instructional techniques offered to ASOs and other cultural bodies using industry experts. This could lead to better standards of instruction and improved skill development programs.

Participants identified other topics deserving of similar treatment such as time management and business skills (preparing taxes and book-keeping). Other skills such as delegating, financial planning, problem-solving and project-management also lend themselves to this kind of program. This program could also be an opportunity for creating an entrepreneurial outlook – by showing participants how to analyze gaps in products or services, how to create ideas to fill in those gaps, and how to be alert for the right person and the right time to sell those ideas. However, many of these skills are outside CCCO’s core HR mandate.

Given that, CCCO should not consider holding such a program itself. Rather **it should promote the concept of a business and entrepreneurial skills program** to a group of constituency-based arts organizations interested in offering this additional value to their cultural workers. CCCO’s role would be to facilitate the development of a consortium of interested parties. CCCO’s role could ensure pedagogical standards are met by offering the services of an adult education specialist. The partners’ roles would be to recommend and engage guests, promote the program to artists, handle fees and registration and find venues.

RECOMMENDATION #5

CCCO should develop a pilot program in business and entrepreneurial skills. CCCO would act as facilitator, including enlisting a group of interested arts service organizations and others arts organizations in the program, sorting out the roles of individual organizations and offering pedagogical coaching.

2. Speaker Series

In interviews and focus groups, some community-based arts service organizations (ASOs) had expressed an interest in bringing in an international expert in cultural HR to Toronto to spend a learning-day with senior executives of cultural organizations. This opportunity could act as the launch of a Speakers Series for the cultural community.

These ASOs brought the Continuous Professional Development Program (CPDP) to CCCO’s attention. This is a cultural work practice from England in which a mentor in an organization and an employee strategize a long-term professional development plan by working through a set of specially-constructed questionnaires. The plan is tailored to the individual. CPDP has received some attention in England and is particularly associated with one internationally-known cultural expert manager.

CCCO did detailed reading of the program and met and corresponded with the experts to see whether this was a significant change in how HR practice was undertaken in other

jurisdictions. Despite its reputation, the concept did not seem original or clear enough to warrant the cost of bringing experts to the city.

While potentially important in terms of stimulating thinking, speaker's programs are costly and require considerable administrative effort. Cultural HR practice may not yet be sufficiently differentiated to warrant this kind of attention. The concept was not pursued further.

3. HR Swap Meet

CCCO did another pilot for an alternative learning format – the HR Swap Meet, intended to address the need for accessible in-career training on HR topics. It was a three-hour round-robin program in which five peer experts covered HR topics useful to emerging and mid-career managers: HR 101 for Small Organizations, Recruiting, Money-less Staff Motivating, Rewarding Volunteers, and Pizzazz in Your Presentations.

Cultural managers known for their expertise in these areas agreed to lead the half-hour sessions, presenting tips and facilitating discussion. Participants moved from table to table, topic to topic. It served the purpose of providing quick, practical information from peers in the community on HR topics of interest in daily work.

The Swap Meet concept was intended to provide aspiring and mid-career managers in small and mid-size organizations with an opportunity to discuss HR in an accessible format, fitting within one work afternoon. At the event, they could identify experts with whom they could network afterwards, and they were given short, practical best practice examples that could be replicated in daily work.

CCCO expected 35 participants but the Swap Meet attracted 50. Though the event was geared to the smaller organization, there was only one small organization represented; the rest came from mid-size and even large organizations. In addition, many of the participants came from arts service organizations and even educational organizations.

CCCO extended the life of the Swap Meet by posting the tips and resources collected from peer leaders to the website Tips & Template section.

Evaluations were positive although there were many suggestions for improvements to the format. Evaluations also noted that more promotion has to be done to the small organizations whose generalist managers really need this information.

The following topics were suggested for future Swap Meets:

- terminating difficult employees
- growing your organization
- workload and work-life balance
- prioritizing
- workplace conflict
- managing volunteers

- marketing
- governance
- fundraising
- diversity in the workplace
- managing change
- managing downsizing
- supervising, corrective action and termination of volunteers
- performance problems, dismissals and terminations
- performance reviews and legal compliance
- work culture and employee motivation/engagement

While the topics of governance and fundraising are important, the priority in future swap meets should remain on HR topics; this may be the only opportunity cultural managers have to focus on these matters.

RECOMMENDATION # 6

CCCO should continue the Swap Meet on an annual basis. It is a simple, low-cost learning format that can be used for a variety of HR topics. Peer experts should be given some coaching in handling groups and stimulating questions.

Material generated by the Swap Meet can also be used for hand-outs as well as for other CCCO programs and the website.

A final attendance list with telephone numbers should be circulated to all participants after the event to generate more networking.

D. 3 Learning Strategies for Specially Targeted Skill Gaps

1. Marketing and Income Generation

For five years, CCCO in collaboration with private and educational partners has presented the Income Managers Program, a comprehensive Professional Training Program for a career in fundraising and marketing in the cultural sector.

The full program offers 54 weeks of both ‘hands-on’ and ‘classroom’ training experience. There are two 5½ month on-site work placements and 7 weeks of classroom and industry awareness seminars held in ‘institutes’ in August and February. Typically 20 people will take the full course and graduate to work in the field.

There is a dramatic lack of trained arts fundraising and marketing personnel. In such a financially marginalized sector this training is crucial. Understanding income generation is equally important to the different sub sectors as well as to the creative organizations and the member-oriented arts service and trade associations within the sectors. With the drive towards project-based funding at the government levels, the skills of income generation have become important for all.

As this is a key skill gap affecting the entire community, CCCO revived the program five years ago. It is the only comprehensive certificate training program in North America

exclusively devoted to skill improvement in arts income development; it offers curriculum appropriate to the working arts professional.

The Income Managers Program involves a number of partners: a private company, Genovese and Vanderhoof & Associates, developed the program, assembles instructors, develops curriculum; residence takes place at the University of Waterloo through the Centre for Cultural Management; CCCO provides promotion and administrative support. The program has been funded through a mix of government funding (such as the Canada Council for the Arts, and Human Resources and Social Development), private foundation assistance, and matching salary contributions from the cultural organizations in which interns are placed.

Study consultations showed the continuing importance of addressing this skill gap but noted **two important challenges for the program: accessibility and consistent funding.**

Funding has been an issue for the institute throughout its history. (At a certain point, despite its importance, the institute was even closed because of a lack of funding.) Since CCCO revived the program, it has managed to various partners to keep it going. However, these partners have indicated that they can provide only so many iterations of funding and each subsequent year has become tighter and more uncertain.

The program primarily focuses on Ontario-based professionals and work placements. These placements are the heart of the program for those wishing to become professionals in income generation.

Ontario's Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities supports apprenticeship programs in over 130 trades. Only two are related to culture. However, the concept of apprenticeship may be relevant to the Income Managers Program and could offer potentially greater stability. Through MTCU, the government offers apprenticeship certification to numerous skilled trades through a combination of hands-on training in the workplace and classroom instruction. Apprenticeships allow people to earn money as they develop skills. There are many congruencies between the Income Managers Program and the apprenticeship program at the Ministry.

It is important to understand what the challenges to apprenticeship support are for the cultural community. Further, for the Income Managers Program in particular, it is important to see whether the program is adaptable to the apprenticeship model and what would be traded off, or added, in exchange for the stability of funding.

RECOMMENDATION #7

CCCO should conduct a study of the features of apprenticeship training and support in Ontario in order to determine the challenges for the cultural community in the model. The study should include whether and how it would be possible to adapt the Income Managers Program to that format, and what the long-term

implications would be for income managers as a profession and for the cultural sector.

As part of the Income Managers Program, classroom instruction (the ‘institutes’) are open to working cultural professionals who want to learn marketing and income generation skills. However, the cost of the summer institute (\$2,000) and the need to be resident in Waterloo for three working weeks has always made it too steep for most people. Not surprisingly, all the interviews and focus groups of all stages of this study wanted to see the institute made more accessible to a wider range of arts professionals to enhance their skills in this area, even if they were not intending to specialize.

CCCO did a feasibility study to determine whether and how the institute could be run to make it more open to a wider range of arts professionals. CCCO considered the implications of simplifying the course and relocating it to Toronto where there is the greatest density of cultural workers, a greater number of venues, a number of industry experts and a record of workers who want the program but cannot afford it.

The feasibility study found that it was possible to condense the three-week course by 50% into eight modules (four in marketing and four in development/fundraising). Each module would be one day long and take place at a consistent time and day each month from September through May.

The suggested topics are: Introduction to Development, The Development Cycle, ‘Moves’ Management, Capital and Endowment Campaigns, Introduction to Marketing, The Marketing Mix, Advertising/PR, Subscriptions and Single Tickets. Assignments and readings would be required and a certificate of completion awarded at the end.

The study found it possible to reduce the tuition to \$800 (40% of the regular cost). This would effectively cover all costs including delivering the modules, fees for academic directors and teachers, and room rentals. The study noted that if the room rental were donated and/or students paid the costs of textbooks themselves, the program could be run with fewer registrants or at a more reduced fee.

Opinions of the proposed curriculum and price were solicited from a range of arts professionals including previous Income Managers Program graduates, managers of small and large organizations, heads of development, arts service association leaders, etc. They felt it would appeal best to junior and emerging workers, small and mid-size organizations, generalist managers and those heading cultural project. They also felt the price was fair.

Initial start-up costs (such as administrative planning by CCCO, marketing and promotion of the new course, and academic planning by the course directors) were not covered in this scenario and would require separate assistance. After the first year, the program could likely be run on a cost-recovery basis. However, to ensure consistent progress by class members and clear revenues, the program would be limited to working

arts professionals (not students) and the course would be offered as a complete set (i.e. it would not be possible to register for individual modules).

This possibility fulfills a long-standing request by study participants and members of the cultural community to make the program more accessible and improve the crucial income generation skills within the sector as a whole.

RECOMMENDATION #8

CCCO should offer the Income Managers Institute to working professionals annually in Toronto. CCCO should seek start-up costs to cover administrative planning, marketing and promotion of the new program, and academic planning. These costs would be on a one-time basis only.

2. Executive Directors

Through the period of the study, one thing has become surprisingly evident: the paucity of professional development opportunities for senior artistic and administrative leadership of organizations and executive directors. CCCO was consistently surprised by attendance at the various events it held. Though targeted at emerging and mid-career workers for small and mid-size organizations, events attracted other leaders as well – including those from large organizations such as the National Ballet or the Royal Botanical Gardens or CanStage and executive directors of arts service organizations.

In particular, executive directors of arts service organizations (ASOs) are an important category of worker. Executive directors of ASOs fulfill essential roles as leaders of constituency-based organizations. They are responsible not just for their own staff but also for the well-being of whole sectoral groups. They are the key partners in any of CCCO's work and in its communication. Although not all cultural workers belong to these organizations, their role in directly reaching artists and influencing workers in the cultural field is unmatched.

Yet ASO executive directors have no association to back them up or provide professional development.

ASO executive directors are looking for those opportunities for themselves. That may be the reason for the development of 215 Spadina, 401 Richmond St. and other sites in the city as physical homes for many cultural associations. In some rare instances, directors have turned to other bodies such as the Maytree Foundation. Only one director reported turning to the Canadian Society of Association Executives. Though there have been some attempts at supporting leadership in Ontario (Arts Leadership Network), these attempts are now defunct. CCCO's database contains 59 arts service organizations. There are also another 40 unions and locals, administrative resource organizations, marketing bodies and trade associations which have similar roles and concerns to those of ASOs.

The possibility of improving the capacity of association executive directors is critical to the long-term health of the sector. Improving their skills can help with the capacity and

sustainability of the sector as a whole. CCCO looked at established professional development models to help this critical category of worker.

Perhaps the most useful, simple and practical has been the establishment of peer learning circles which exist in some Canadian and American cities. (A Calgary learning circle was documented in a report called *Strengthening the Capacity of Executive Directors* which was done for the National Learning Initiative for the Voluntary Sector in 2004.) These circles offer safe, supportive and stimulating environments in which leadership skills can be enhanced through actions in the workplace.

The peer learning circle is a small group of workers, usually no more than ten. An outside facilitator does needed research and chairs discussions. Participants commit to attending regular monthly meetings for up to a year. The meetings provide a safe forum for information exchange, dialogue, reflection and intense review of issues; they are also a catalyst for action. Meetings are concise (a half day) and structured to be part of a working day. There is a commitment by participants to address particular issues within their organizations in some way.

An important service that CCCO could provide would be **to test the leadership circle concept with ASO executive directors. The objective would be to develop skills to address the biggest issues they face.**

The Capacity to Serve, A Qualitative Study of the Challenges Facing Canada's Nonprofit and Voluntary Organizations (2003, the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy), made the point that association executives are caught between the demands of project-based funding and the need for sustainability, between government-directed funding and the need to continue core activities. These financial challenges test and constrain their ability to fulfill their services. There are three kinds of capacity organizations can draw on to achieve their objectives – financial capacity, human resources capacity, and structural capacity (relationships and networks, infrastructure and products, planning and development).

RECOMMENDATION #9

CCCO should offer the opportunity of a small peer learning circle program to a group of executive directors, willing to explore the possibilities of addressing skills in financial, human resources and structural capacities.

It is important that the group be self-selected; willingness to take part is crucial to the development of trust in the group which allows individual participants to bring forward actions, successes and failures to the group.

Documentation of the peer learning circle could note changes, if any, in the skills of executive directors in these areas, whether and what changes were instituted in their organizations or with groups outside, and what the impact of these changes were.

Ultimately, publication of the study could affect human resource capacity in the whole cultural sector.

E. Professional Development Research

Although the assumptions underlying this paper are generally held in the cultural community, there have been few studies of and very little focus on professional development issues in Ontario (see Appendix E). The few studies that exist look at specific categories of workers, rather than approaching the sector as a whole. Finally, there is little understanding of how Ontario fits into or lags behind accepted standards of professional development in Canada or internationally and how other sectors in Ontario approach the issue.

This was not an objective of the study, but the importance of this type of research cannot be stressed enough. The lack of a statistical foundation makes it difficult to get across the message and case for professional development to individuals and organizations in culture and to various jurisdictions.

The final recommendation is therefore for CCCO to undertake a thorough research study into general professional development issues for human resources in the whole sector. Here are some of the questions that need to be addressed:

- What are the generally accepted standards in professional development spending and impact that support such activities? Are there specific standards in cultural HR that can be applied to Ontario?
- Are there existing innovative models in cultural professional development which Ontario should review and what has been the impact of those models on the cultural economy?
- What are individuals and organizations in arts and culture spending on professional development currently, what keeps them back from it, where do they find resources? What is the current role of taxation and other government instruments in stimulating and resourcing professional development?
- What is the focus of existing professional development activities in Ontario and how is it supported? How much is spent on professional development in the sector as a whole? How does this compare with other jurisdictions?
- Can we take representative samples from each of the five sub sectors of culture represented by CCCO to determine a base line for professional development spending and activities in Ontario?
- What other sectoral councils exist? Have they undertaken programs or initiatives that could stimulate creative ideas in cultural professional development in this province?
- What new forms of professional development programs and support are there outside Canada that can stimulate the cultural economy and social and artistic creativity?

-RECOMMENDATION # 10

Cultural Careers Council Ontario should undertake a large scale study of professional development across all the sub sectors. The study should address the need for statistical information on the subject, the relationship of Ontario to internationally accepted norms in this area, and the impact of professional development activity on the cultural economy and on social and artistic creativity.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1

Cultural Careers Council Ontario should develop an online index for its HR tools series and any other CCCO publications. This will make it easier for online users to find information.

RECOMENDATION #2

CCCO should expand its online inventory of HR resources (Tips & Templates) with sample materials from the cultural community relevant to a greater range of HR topics, including recruiting and staffing, compensation, training and development, health and safety, recognition, diversity and the work-life balance. Research to enlarge the inventory in the Tips & Templates section should also cover the HR skills needed for entrepreneurialism in arts and culture.

RECOMMENDATION #3

CCCO should plan and test an opportunity for cultural workers to question experts in HR issues. By promoting the questions and answers on its website, CCCO can expand the HR knowledge of workers in the sector. This initiative should be planned with such industry bodies as the Association of Cultural Executives and/or educational programs such as the Centre for Cultural Management or the Humber College School of Arts Administration. This may also be an opportunity for CCCO to partner with groups from outside the sector such as the Human Resources Professionals Association of Ontario.

RECOMMENDATION #4

CCCO should communicate the value and experience of multidisciplinary events to others offering professional development opportunities in culture; this may encourage others to offer workshops on transferable skills to cultural workers outside their particular art forms.

RECOMMENDATION #5

CCCO should develop a pilot program in business and entrepreneurial skills. CCCO would act as facilitator, including enlisting a group of interested arts service organizations and others arts organizations in the program, sorting out the roles of individual organizations and offering pedagogical coaching

RECOMMENDATION # 6

CCCO should continue the Swap Meet on an annual basis. It is a simple, low-cost learning format that can be used for a variety of HR topics. Peer experts should be given some coaching in handling groups and stimulating questions. Material generated by the Swap Meet can also be used for hand-outs as well as for other CCCO programs and the website. A final attendance list with telephone numbers should be circulated to all participants after the event to generate more networking.

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Documentation of the peer learning circle could note changes, if any, in the skills of executive directors in these areas, whether and what changes were instituted in their organizations or with groups outside, and what the impact of these changes were. Ultimately, publication of the study could affect human resource capacity in the whole cultural sector.

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APPENDICES

NOTE:

This on-line version of this Report does not include any of the following appendices.

These can be made available on request to CCCO at:

416-340-0086

info@workinculture.ca

Appendices:

- A: Skills Grid for Ontario Cultural Workers
- B: List of People Consulted
- C: Summaries of Pilot Projects
- D: Workshop Pilots – Pricing and Negotiating
 - People to People Skills of the Job Search
 - HR Swap Meet
- E: Other Skill Studies List
- F: CCCO New Website Announcement