



2013 Arts Labs

Sector-led actions to enhance the youth arts business sector



On November 19 and 21, 2013 the City's Arts Services held its 2013 Arts Lab working group meetings with key community partners and arts organizations. The goal of these meetings was to further map out tangible actions in the first two action areas the community identified on the May 8, 2013 "Arts Lab Report" session.

1. How we can work together as a sector to help youth build career paths through progressive participation in our programs?
2. What could we do together as a sector to better enhance/facilitate employment and/or mentorship opportunities for underserved youth in arts and culture?

Over 16 dedicated individuals representing 13 arts organizations and community arts networks attended the meetings. The groups consisted of experienced community arts groups and artists who were interested in developing and creating greater opportunities for youth in the arts and greater access and linkages between organizations and their programs. Each working group developed key topic areas that will help move these recommendations forward.

2014 Arts Labs – Work is expected to continue through 2014 and create tangible solutions to further collaboratively build the youth arts and business sector in Toronto.

Background

The Creative Capital Gains Action Plan for Toronto (adopted by City Council, May 2011) recommends establishing "regular quarterly meetings with youth arts organizations, and City of Toronto divisions and agencies in each part of the city, East, West, North and South Toronto." The goal is to ensure access and opportunity for cultural participation to all citizens regardless of age, ethnicity, ability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status or geography.

In 2012, four Arts Labs were held in various parts of the city to address "The Business of Youth Arts." This series of meetings is the first of its kind to bring together artists, arts organizations, community partners, and the public, to leverage each other's strength and resources, with an aim to build Toronto's youth arts business sector collaboratively.

On May 8, 2013, Arts Services staff gave an overview of the [Report](#) sharing insights gathered through the 2012 Arts Lab process and presented 4 draft recommendations based on those findings. Stakeholders gathered together to discuss those recommendations in four working groups.

The recommendations:

1. Facilitate the development of a ladder of opportunity
2. Enhance collaboration and resource sharing
3. Support organizational capacity building
4. Leverage best practices to help youth build creative business (with a focus on social enterprise)

Based on the ideas of the working groups, five action areas emerge that will help enhance the youth arts business sector. These action areas are:

1. Develop and facilitate a ladder of opportunity for youth in their career development as the move through one program to the next.
2. Build and develop employment and mentorship opportunities in the arts for youth.
3. Build and develop shared administrative services to youth-led organizations/organizations serving youth to enhance organizational effectiveness and sustainability.
4. Enhance existing portals/platforms/networks to enhance information and resource-sharing.
5. Develop a road map to guide youth who is interested in starting a social enterprise.

More info on Arts Labs is available at www.toronto.ca/artslab. Should you be interested in connecting with the project, contact Margaret Chan at mchan4@toronto.ca or 416-338-0491.

Toronto Cultural Services would like to thank all individuals who have contributed to the process since 2012. We are grateful that some many dedicated community arts organizations, artists, and cross-sectoral partners have actively contributed to this joint effort to co-build the youth arts business sector for underserved youth in Toronto.

