Deakin Research Online

This is the published version:


Available from Deakin Research Online:

http://hdl.handle.net/10536/DRO/DU:30032192

Reproduced with the kind permissions of the copyright owner.

Copyright : 2010, The Authors
Reflections on multicultural artists’ employment and career prospects

Dr David Edwards*

School of Management and Marketing, Deakin University

Email: david.edwards@deakin.edu.au

Dr Huong Le

School of Management and Marketing, Deakin University

Email: huong@deakin.edu.au

*About the authors

Dr David Edwards

Dr David Edwards (PhD Boston University) is Senior Research Fellow in the Employment and Social Exclusion (EASE) Research Group, School of Psychology, Deakin University, Australia. EASE research focuses on socially and economically disadvantaged groups including: people with a disability; people with mental illness; older workers and people with a criminal justice history. Dr Edwards has a specific interest in psychiatric disability, employment and education. He is committed to research and teaching about the impact of social exclusion on the well-being of individuals and society.

Dr Huong Le

Dr Huong Le (PhD, University of Sydney) is a Lecturer in Management at the School of Management and Marketing, Deakin University. She has taught and conducted research at universities in Australia and institutions in Vietnam. Her research interests include cross-cultural research in arts management, arts marketing, audience development, tourism marketing, gender and leadership, and arts entrepreneurship. Her research has been published in a number of journals and in chapters in edited books such as Museum Marketing, and Tourist Satisfaction and Complaining Behavior. Dr Le is the corresponding author and can be contacted at: huong@deakin.edu.au.

Acknowledgement

We would like to thank the multicultural artists and arts managers who participated in this project. We are grateful to the Office of Multicultural Interests (Western Australia) and other individuals and organisations for their tremendous support, guidance and enthusiasm. We would also like to acknowledge the work Professor Ruth Rentschler who directed the Western Australia Intercultural Arts Research Project along with work of the Research Assistants, Ms Natalie Jenkins and Ms Angela Osborne.
Abstract

This paper analyses multicultural artists’ perceptions of their employment and career prospects in the arts. We do this first by reviewing the relatively small body of literature on multicultural artists’ careers and supplement that with a literature review of general vocational development literature. Further, we examine the degree to which multicultural artists possess the generic employability skills necessary to gain and retain employment in Australia. We use data from a small-scale qualitative study, conducted in Western Australia, which identified artists’ perceptions of barriers to participation in the arts in general and to paid employment in particular. From the literature and studied data, we propose a ‘Dual Responsibilities Framework for Career Management of Multicultural Artists’.

Key words: multicultural artists, career management, employability skills, barriers, participation

There are limited studies that identify barriers to multicultural artists’ participation in the arts, particularly in regard to the relationship between their barriers and employment prospects. We answer two research questions for this paper:

1. What affects multicultural artists’ participation in the paid workforce?
2. What is the level of employability of multicultural artists?

In this study, we present the findings from a sample of multicultural artists living in Western Australia (WA). We identify key barriers for multicultural artists’ participation in the arts and propose practical ways to ease the current situation of multicultural artists in Australia. This research contributes to the understanding of the relationships between ethnicity and the factors that hinder career development of multicultural artists in Australia by presenting a model of ‘Dual Responsibilities for Career Management of Multicultural Artists’.

Artists, in general, often face barriers that influence their creativity and quality of life. However, artists from non-English speaking countries reportedly face even more difficult challenges gaining employment. Moreover, sometimes low levels of English language proficiency may also limit access to mainstream resources, advocacy and support. While, for some, the arts is seen as a prestigious occupation with a high status that can partially mitigate the economic disadvantages (Karhunen, 1996), not all artists report being held in high regard. Given the multicultural identity of WA, the prominence of multicultural policies to the WA government, and the isolation of the state of WA and its populace, the State Government Office of Multicultural Interests commissioned research into issues faced by culturally and linguistically diverse artists. The outcomes of that

---

1 In WA Intercultural Arts project we used the terminology “culturally and linguistically diverse” (CaLD) artists. CaLD refers to "the wide range of cultural groups and individuals that make up the Australian population. It includes groups and individuals who differ according to religion, race, language and ethnicity, except those whose ancestry is Anglo-Saxon, Anglo-Celtic, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander" (Rentschler, Le and Osborne, 2008:7). For the purposes of this paper, we use a shorthand term “multicultural” for the term “CaLD".
FACTORs AFFECTING MULTICULTURAL ARTISTS’ PARTICIPATION IN THE ARTS

We have divided literature into two broad strands: external contextual and structural factors; and internal social–psychological factors.

External factors are defined as the structural and societal factors which are perceived as barriers to artists’ participation in the arts and to their career advancement. External dimensions, such as structural barriers in organisations, the structure of the world of work and of society more generally, are used as explanations (Andrew, Coderre & Denis, 1990). Internal factors are defined as the behaviour and personality dimensions that create barriers to multicultural artists participating in the arts and to their career advancement. Internal dimensions such as education, income, language barriers, race, gender, cultural differences and skill levels are cited (Brooks, 2002).

External factors: Work, Employment Prospects and the Life of Artists

There is limited literature on barriers to multicultural artists’ participation as paid employees in the arts or as self-employed sole traders; however, there is extensive literature reporting on the economic conditions and employment prospects of artists. The dominant factor affecting artists’ participation in the paid workforce is the limited opportunity to work and earn a satisfactory income as an artist. Studies show that artists have difficulty in accessing paid employment and struggle with work and life. Menger (1999) notes that artists are more likely to be self-employed, unemployed or under-employed. Throsby (1996) reports similar patterns of disrupted and sub-optimal employment among artists. Paradoxically, despite the high educational level of many artists, they tend to be employed in casual or contract jobs to supplement the meagre incomes they earn from their art. Many artists minimise their occupational risk by holding multiple jobs and roles (Menger, 1999, Viladrich, 2005). They are often freelancers, temporarily employed, sole traders or micro-businesses (Shorthose & Strange, 2004).

In a worst case scenario, many of the immigrant dancers in New York were forced to live a dual life by combining their roles as ‘glamorous artists’ with low-skilled occupations to make ends meet, and were unable to sustain themselves economically through their art (Markusen, 2006, Viladrich, 2005). Rentschler et al. (2008) also found similar patterns of unemployment and/or under-employment among the multicultural artists

investigation are reported in Rentschler, Le and Osborne (2008). This paper draws on data from that funded research project.
interviewed in the WA intercultural arts study. The situation for the multicultural artists interviewed as part of the WA Intercultural Arts study showed that only 6% of artist earned a living wage from their art (either full-time or part-time) but all ideally would have liked to earn their principal income from their art form. No artist reported that their art was a non-economic activity by design.

In addition, multicultural artists may experience some form of discrimination. Approximately 12% of Queensland and NSW residents (from a total sample of 5,056 people) self-identified themselves as prejudiced and holding beliefs that were racially separatist and supremacist (Dunn, Forrest, Burnley & McDonald, 2004). The survey findings revealed a substantial degree of intolerance of Muslim and Arab-Australians. Unfortunately, this level of discrimination has the potential to generate substantial inter-communal tension in the workplace and other public realms of Australian society (Dunn et al., 2004). However, there is limited literature in arts management discussing this issue.

**Internal factors: Employability skills and other skills and their impact on career development**

In addition to numerous external barriers to participation in the arts, artists are often cited as needing the skills and awareness to promote themselves. Ambler (1999) explains how the integral nature of art has resulted in many Indigenous artists in North America needing to be made aware of effective marketing, arguing that this is an important skill that needs to be taught to artists. Similarly, Shorthose and Strange (2004) assert that, within creative communities, artists often need to create ‘portfolio careers’, combining a number of different employment and income streams.

*Employment Skills for the Future: A Theoretical Framework*

In 2002, the Commonwealth Government funded the Business Council of Australia and the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry to investigate the generic skills that Australian workers in general needed to sustain national economic growth. The findings are reported in Employment Skills for the Future (Commonwealth Department of Education Science and Training, 2002). The identified ‘Employability Skills’ are applicable across a broad range of job and life contexts. They are sometimes referred to by other names such as: key skills; core skills; life skills; or key competencies. However, the Australian industry peak bodies prefer the term employment skills.
The Employment Skills for the Future report defines employment skills as those required not only to gain employment but also to progress within an enterprise so as to achieve one’s potential and contribute successfully to enterprise strategic directions. This is an important concept as there is no limit to the size of the enterprise in which the employment skills are required. These generic skills are just as important to a one-person business operation as they are to a major corporation. Eight employment skills were identified, namely: Communication; Team Work; Initiative and Enterprise; Problem Solving; Planning and Organising; Self-Management; Learning; and Technology. Table 1 provides a brief definition of these skills.

Insert Table 1 here

Overall, the vast majority of the literature has focused on the external contextual and structural factors impacting on multicultural artists participating in the arts and their career development. There have been fewer published materials on the internal factors creating barriers to multicultural artists’ participation, such as deficiencies in employment and career management skills and attitudinal problems.

RESEARCH METHODS

Data collection

This study was commissioned by the Department for Communities, Office of Multicultural Interests which explored the barriers to multicultural artists participating in the arts. Multicultural artists are defined in this study as those with non-Anglo Saxon or Anglo Celtic backgrounds in WA (see also page 2). We defined an artist as any person, professional or non-professional, “who creates or gives expression to, or recreates a work of art; who considers his [sic] artistic creation to be an essential part of his life; who contributes in this way to the development of art and culture; who is, or asks to be, recognised in this way by contributing to the development of art and culture; and who is, or asks to be, recognised as an artist, whether or not he [sic] is bound by any contract of employment or association” (Throsby & Hollister, 2003, p.13). While the artist participants were included in our sample if they recognised themselves as artists, we tried to exclude those who did their art as hobbyists. Indigenous was not included in this project due to a specific scope of this research. Screening questions were used to ensure that the artists selected met all the above criteria.

Arts managers of professional arts organisations in a range of art forms in metropolitan and regional Western Australia were also invited to participate in this research. A total of 104 people were interviewed in
person, via telephone, or online from metropolitan and regional areas of WA. Our data came from conducting eight focus groups of multicultural artists, totalling 61 people, 11 web log interviews with multicultural artists and 32 in-depth interviews with arts managers. The artists practiced a wide variety of art forms but a majority of them were from music/composing; visual art; dance; and multimedia. We had diverse backgrounds of the participated artists such as Chinese, African, Italian, Germany, Dutch, Indian and Malay.

Semi-structured interview questions for artists and arts managers were used in the focus groups, in-depth interviews and web log interviews.

Data analysis

We used content analysis techniques to analyse qualitative data (Neuman, 2006). After three researchers and/or research assignments edited, segmented, and summarised the qualitative data independently, a coding system was developed to identify and develop concepts, themes and categories, based upon research questions and literature. We followed the data analysis procedures of Neuman (2006) and Miles and Huberman (1994). We divide the data analysis into two stages. First, we primarily identified themes and sub-themes which yielded patterns and regularities in relation to factors influenced their career and/or practicing their art. These then became the categories or themes compatible with the purposes of the study. Second, we reanalysed the data in the light of the framework of Employment Skills for the Future (Commonwealth Department of Education Science and Training, 2002) (see Table 1) to see how the artists' perceived barriers to participation in the paid workforce potentially influenced their level of employability skills and career. The themes and categories were then confirmed and refined in relation to what we saw in the data. We compared and contrasted different data sources (e.g., from artists and arts managers) and used data triangulation to validate data. Understanding that this was an ongoing process, we had to re-read and refine data repeatedly to confirm and verify themes, and draw conclusions from the data in relation to the barriers to multicultural artists participating in the arts in WA.

Our study is not without its limitations. The size of WA, the spread of artists throughout the state, and the lack of a database meant that recruitment was an arduous and time-consuming process. For these reasons, it was challenging to obtain homogeneous focus groups, with artists from the same, or similar, cultural backgrounds. We also acknowledge that regional artists are under-represented in this study and we recognise that the participant sample may be considered biased. However, we used multiple sources of data (from artists and arts
managers) to provide new perspectives for academic enquiry. Future research could generalise the findings by conducting a statistical study with multicultural artists from different parts of Australia.

EMPLOYABILITY AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

What affects multicultural artists’ participation in the paid workforce? External factors

In the course of the interviews, many respondents indicated that the barriers for multicultural artists were no different from those faced by other artists. On the one hand, these include a lack of opportunities and markets to exhibit or perform their work; difficulty in attracting audience interest in their work; a dearth of resources to rehearse, or develop, and produce new work. On the other hand, others considered that the barriers they faced were either the product of, or exacerbated by, their multicultural backgrounds. The majority identified external barriers limited market opportunities.

Who and where is our market?

The largest single issue raised by artists in all focus groups, and by arts managers, was that there was a lack of opportunities for artists’ employment, including multicultural artists. City-based and regionally-based artists stated that the opportunities (in a range of art forms, particularly theatre, visual arts, fashion and some types of handcrafts) were so limited that it was impossible to even think about making a living from their art. One artist said: “I’m trying to remember over the time I’ve been working in Western Australia ... potential employment opportunities as opposed to relying on your own reputation and self-employment and they’ve been very, very few.”; or “… so as a visual artist: employment, zero.” Further, if there is an opportunity to show their works, it is often one-off, rather than an on-going opportunity.

Similarly, arts managers said that lack of employment opportunities is the same for all artists, irrespective of their cultural backgrounds. One manager told us, “…there’s not as many opportunities, particularly in our field of theatre, there’s very few of what we’d call career opportunities for artists. ... but I think it’s very hard for anyone in Perth, in theatre, to develop what you’d call an actual professional career, cause’ there’s so few opportunities.” This type of frustrated opportunity is widely reported in both the Australian and international literature on artists’ employment.

In addition, arts managers and artists revealed that a lack of audiences for arts created a significant external barrier for multicultural artists, and that audiences were unwilling to explore or engage with artistic output that
was not familiar to them. One artist said, "... audiences just don’t understand". The literature also confirms this phenomenon reporting that artists often lack employment opportunities, there is a lack of markets for their art, so they are more likely to be self-employed, unemployed or under-employed (Throsby, 1996, Menger, 1999, Shorthose & Strange, 2004, Viladrich, 2005, Markusen, 2006).

**Pigeon-holing**

In addition to lack of employment and markets for their art, artists expressed varying degrees of frustration at being 'boxed in' or 'pigeon-holed' according to their ethnicity. They believed that discrimination was a barrier to their participation in the arts. Many artists even stated that they did not want to be considered as artists from culturally and linguistically backgrounds and wanted recognition without reference to their ethnicity or colour, "I wish I wasn’t seen as a [Country] artist, just visual artist, please", said one artist. Also, artists mentioned that an over-emphasis on ethnicity could lead to problematic implications for their arts practice. Similarly, one arts manager said: "... a lot of multicultural artists don’t like to have the finger pointed at them and be boxed at multicultural... They want to be respected and supported and presented in the same way as any contemporary artist or any artist working in the field they are working in without the labels and the stereotypes." Based on the current literature, there is some validity to the discriminatory experiences reported by the respondents in the WA.

**Lack of communication and information within the sector**

Many artists raised the issue of information flow and communication within the arts sector in WA. The artists indicated that there was a lack of communication and connection between government departments, arts organisations, ethnic communities and artists. One arts manager stated, "They don’t know what they don’t know", inferring that the artists lacked knowledge of available assistance programs and funding schemes, and where to find the information or to seek help. In a different view, arts managers mentioned that it was difficult getting to communities to let them know about programs and opportunities that would assist them. This finding indicates that forging relationships and partnerships with key members of the community and within peak bodies in the arts and arts organisations is necessary to facilitate communication flow. However, it was evident from the data that many multicultural artists lacked ‘help-seeking behaviour’.
Lack of funding and resources

It is not surprising that the lack of resources and difficulty in obtaining external financial support are often cited among the barriers. A lack of resources was often mentioned in two contexts: first, in relation to the absence of appropriate places in which to rehearse or create their art or store their equipment; and second, in regard to the costs associated with putting on a performance, exhibition and production of their art which could be a great hurdle for a person living on a low income or unemployed.

While a lack of resources to practise art was an ongoing issue for artists irrespective of their backgrounds, access to external funding was often cited by artists as a major problem. Specifically, artists often mentioned that the application processes and guidelines were difficult to understand. One artist told us:

A grant application is very specific and even for those people who are born in Australia and English is their first language, it is still extremely difficult for them to verbalise because they are creative people, you know, they don’t know how to actually verbalise what it is they want, well, not verbalise but write what it is they want to explore through the funding application...

Some government funding processes were seen as so demanding that some artists with prior negative experiences with the process decided not to bother applying again. These findings suggest that governments need not only to provide some specific funding for multicultural artists but also to consider their language disadvantages when assessing their applications. Further, more support in writing funding applications and how to find such support needs to be indicated clearly on the websites of funding bodies. The inclusion of people from culturally-diverse backgrounds and multicultural artists on peer assessment panels should be considered to facilitate and evaluate multicultural artists’ funding applications. Further improvements in funding processes could enable multicultural artists to explore and express their intercultural artwork.

Internal factors: Levels of employability skills of multicultural artists

Together with the above external barriers, we examined the levels of employability of artists as internal factors impacting on their career management, using the Employability Skills of Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training (2002). The levels of employability skills evident among multicultural artists interviewed during the WA Intercultural Arts study indicated they could well be described as living in a state of ‘learned helplessness’. The ‘learned helplessness’ theory holds that a person or group of people have learned to behave helplessly, even when opportunity for change exists (Peterson, Maier & Seligman, 1995). This human inertia is derived from a perceived lack of control over a situation. The researchers recognise that this attitude is
atypical among artists in general, who, despite all the barriers to participation reported in the literature tend to be resilient and resourceful. The combination of frustrated ambition, social isolation, lack of English language skills and poverty weighed heavily on the group.

Language and communication were recurrent themes reported by artists and arts managers in the WA study. Of particular concern were written English language skills, where many artists and arts managers reported that the major challenge to multicultural artists gaining employment through funding grants was their inability to effectively construct a grant application. The following are examples from the collected data: "... if I write a grant application in Spanish, nobody will understand me. Getting a grant depends on your language skills more than the quality of your work"; "I haven't looked for employment, not yet, because with my English, I know I can't talk and write"; "All this funding is out there but you don't know which one to go to or how to do it, or say it"; "Where can you get help to write? We hear of places but don't know where to start"; "Submissions with excellent artistic content and integrity are not being funded due to the quality of their submission, but lesser works are"; and "... Multicultural artists should be able to access specific training in regard to writing applications. Language is very important for the success of applications". Similarly, arts managers also mentioned that "... probably the biggest barrier for cultures to participate in this industry is language...". It can be seen from these comments that although artists may possess the technical skills required to perform their art form, they lack the level of English language competence required to gain funding, and hence paid employment. Some may argue that the non-text based artists might not be influenced by a lack of language competence to perform their art. However, the lack of language skills and ability to communicate will have an adverse impact in other areas of their life, hinder their confidence to market themselves to sell their art and may be reflected in their lack of success in competing with others in paid employment in the arts, and attracting large grant incomes which may exacerbate their social exclusion.

A lack of problem-solving and self-management ability was also evident in the data. These skills' deficiencies were reflected in the difficulties that many artists reported in their dealings with bureaucracy and government services, and impaired their capacity for marketing and self-promotion. For example: "I am unable to negotiate well and get a good fee for my work. I bumble along, kind of making a living but never going to get rich doing it"; "... if you don't self-market your product, it doesn't matter whether you're funded or not, nothing will happen"; "I'm struggling with this situation, I must decide whether to maintain my business status or
abandon it, but I don’t know what to do or where to go”; “... if artists don’t value their own time properly, others don’t take us seriously either, but what to do?”. These data indicate that artists can identify some of the challenges they face in gaining financial reward for their artistic work but appear unwilling or unable to develop effective plans of action to address their challenges. Many sounded overwhelmed by their situation and were unable to seek appropriate assistance. Decision-making and problem-solving is a key employment skill and, when coupled with self-management capacity, is viewed by employers as being very important for entering and competing in job markets.

The Employability Skills set identified two factors which are often associated with self-employed business owner-operators and entrepreneurs. Those skills are ‘initiative and enterprise’ and ‘planning and organising’. While many artists, such as musicians and dancers, deliver their creative works through collective activities, even more of them, such as painters, writers and sculptors, are singleton performers. For the self-employed artists, the business creation and operation skills are particularly important. However, the data indicates that these types of skills are also lacking in many artists. For example: “... costs of putting on arts displays are high, we don’t know what to do or where to go”; “Multicultural Services used to provide help but that position no longer exists. We don’t know where to go”; and “... there’s always a lack of money, there’s no hope for artists”. All these quotations indicate a level of despair amongst the artists interviewed during the study, and such despondency is not conducive to career development. Some artists also admitted that they lacked marketing and self-promotion skills or were having difficulties with gaining the knowledge or those skills. Differently, several artists interviewed were in a more positive state and indicated that they did possess initiative and were commercially astute: “I belong to a pre-machinery embroidery group, we are going to hold an exhibition; as an individual I can’t afford it but, as a group, we can share the costs”; or “I’m marketing myself; I have a studio, flyers and invitations”.

While it was evident from the data that the artists were skilled in their particular art domain, there was little evidence that they had embraced the principles of life-long learning in more general areas of their life. The learning ability refers to an employee’s capability to gain new skills to improve their personal performance and to achieve enterprise operations and outcomes (Commonwealth Department of Education Science and Training, 2002). One indicated, “a lot of us, and I would certainly count myself in this category, don’t negotiate well to
get a really good fee for a job". Yet, other artists were more actively acquiring new skills ‘‘... it's taken me two
years to learn how to write a successful grant application.’’

Our findings indicated that there was little evidence of inter-artist collegiality, team work or networking
among artists in WA. Multicultural artists often raised issues of the lack of communication and connection in the
arts and communities (see external barriers), and mentioned that they would like to have connections with
mainstream artists to exchange artworks. Needless to say, few were willing to proactively address the problem
such as the embroidery group was actively seeking opportunities through team work. Most interviewees seemed
incapable of utilising networks to optimise their employment opportunities. This problem-focus rather than a
solution-focus is a substantial internal barrier for artists to access paid employment.

Despite that technology, such as IT skills, has been a prerequisite for employees to execute their tasks; our
findings show little evidence that artists could use these skills effectively. While a few artists were using
technology for marketing and self-promotion: ‘‘... I’m putting up a website, to spread the news, to do what I
have to do and have a go at business’’; or were using web-based skills and multimedia methods to achieve their
success to promote their art to audiences, the majority were not and relied on low-tech methods to collect
information and promote their work. These findings not only further emphasise the importance for artists to
improve their business and management skills in areas ancillary to the creation of the art, but also emphasise the
need to embrace technology for promotional purposes and learning for the future, as identified in the

DISCUSSION AND CONTRIBUTION

This paper analysed the external and internal barriers that affect employment participation of multicultural
artists. Artists in the study believed that lack of employment opportunity and audiences, ethnicity and culture
were their major barriers to employment. Literature helped to explain that artists in general are likely to be self-
employed, unemployed and under-employed (Throsby, 1996, Menger, 1999, Shorthose & Strange, 2004,
Viladrich, 2005, Markusen, 2006). Those findings were supported by the findings from the Australia Council’s
report (1997), which identified a significant challenge to actors of multicultural and/or indigenous backgrounds
trying to obtain regular work in Australian theatre, film and television. While a range of reasons was offered, the
Australia Council concluded that the greatest influential factor was Australia’s close cultural ties with English
theatre traditions, and that classical theatrical works did not trigger employment accessibility for multicultural artists. Our findings from WA multicultural artists further confirmed the above report.

In spite of the fact that both Throsby and Hollister (2003) and the Australia Council’s study (1997) put an ethno-centric construct on the employment challenges faced by multicultural artists, our findings offer evidence that a majority of interviewed artists lacked of the adequate level of employability necessary to obtain and retain paid employment in the 21st century, and that a general lack of career management skills is a more significant barrier to multicultural artists in competitive job markets. This presents a policy and service delivery challenge for all levels of Australian government. Governments ought to examine the scope of employment skills development services available in their jurisdictions, and examine the manner in which they are marketed to their communities. At the same time, community members, including multicultural artists, need to participate in training courses to improve their employability skills and optimise their employment prospects. Capacity building is identified as an important prerequisite for multicultural artists to enter the paid workforce.

As the barriers to participation for multicultural artists include both internal and external factors, our research contributes to management practice by proposing that the development and success of an artist’s career is a dual responsibility, resting both on the artist and on governments. Table 2 illustrates the division of these dual responsibilities:

**INSERT Table 2 here**

In line with Table 2, we propose the following model, ‘Dual responsibilities model for career management of multicultural artists’, which illustrates the competencies required for artists to succeed.

**INSERT Figure 1 here: Dual responsibilities model for career management of multicultural artists**

As can be seen in Figure 1, our model proposes that multicultural artists play an important role in constructing their own career development by acquiring six career management competencies (see Bridgstock, 2005). However, in order for multicultural artists’ careers to develop, the role of governments as an external facilitator is also important in creating employment opportunities, providing funding for support of organisations, individuals and services, and developing networks among multicultural artists and other migrants. Our model also indicates that, as government support may not be always expected (in this model, a dash circle bounds the artists’ six career competencies), artists are required to take the major responsibility for their career management and to optimise their employment prospects.
CONCLUSIONS

Multicultural artists share all of the frustrations experienced by mainstream artists: a perceived lack of appreciation for their creative activity; audiences not understanding their work; lack of suitable venues to display their works; the costs of venue hire, materials, promotion, and so forth. In addition, there is strong evidence to support their claims that racial and ethnic prejudice does exist in many levels of Australian society. However, based on the evidence from the Western Australian Intercultural Arts study, we conclude that the major impediment to multicultural artists obtaining and retaining paid employment is their general lack of employability skills. Thus, in order for them to succeed, they need to acquire the essential competencies illustrated in Tables 1 and 2.
REFERENCES


Karhunen, P 1996, 'The interaction between artists' professional training and employment in the field of Finnish theatre', *Journal of Cultural Economics*, 20(2), 165-175.


Throsby, CD & Hollister, V 2003, *Don't give up your day job: An economic study of professional artists in Australia*, Australia Council, Sydney.

### Table 1 – Employability skills framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>The ability to contribute to productive and harmonious relationships between employees and customers. Communication skills are underpinned by the assumption that an employee can effectively communicate in English, both orally and in writing, and has numeracy skills commensurate with their level of employment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Work</td>
<td>The ability to engage in productive working relationships and produce outcomes. This skill is predicated on the assumption that the employee has interpersonal skills commensurate with their level of employment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem-solving</td>
<td>The ability to identify problems which affect enterprise objectives and develop creative solutions, develop strategies and test assumptions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiative and Enterprise</td>
<td>This skill is closely linked to problem-solving ability but also involves the capacity to adapt to new or changing circumstances, to generate options and exercise personal initiatives and decision-making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning and Organising</td>
<td>The ability to develop both short-term and long-term goals and plans of action for their achievement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Management</td>
<td>The ability of the employee to achieve personal satisfaction and growth and to manage their work load to achieve enterprise outcomes. This skill is underpinned by the assumption that an employee can manage time and workloads, and meet deadlines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>The learning ability refers to an employee’s capability to gain new skills to improve personal performance, and to expand their capacity to contribute to the achievement of enterprise operations and outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>This skill requires an employee to have an appropriate range of IT skills commensurate with their job for the effective execution of tasks. An employee ought to be able to apply IT as a management tool, and to use IT to organise data.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: (Commonwealth Department of Education Science and Training, 2002)*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Multicultural artists’ responsibilities</th>
<th>Government’s responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Knowing who:</em> improve personal and professional networks (Bridgstock, 2005)</td>
<td>Develop networks among multicultural artists and non-multicultural artists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Knowing why:</em> understand career goals, motivations, interests and meaning (Bridgstock, 2005)</td>
<td>Create more employment opportunities for artists by having diverse performance topics for theatrical works or other art forms; Create various community festivals for promoting multicultural arts and community development and opportunities for multicultural artists to perform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Knowing what:</em> opportunities and threats in one’s industry and critical factors to success (Bridgstock, 2005)</td>
<td>Facilitate communication and information flow between government and communities and artists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Knowing where:</em> identify and choose the best opportunities for careers advancement in terms of geography, projects and role (Bridgstock, 2005)</td>
<td>Provide funding through peak arts bodies and through immigration support organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Knowing when:</em> how long to stay in one role, when to move to a new opportunity (Bridgstock, 2005)</td>
<td>Create policy to eliminate racism and prejudice towards people with multicultural backgrounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Knowing how:</em> skills needed to perform a job such as communication skills, language skills and marketing skills (Bridgstock, 2005)</td>
<td>Encourage the arts industry and arts managers by increasing employment for people from multicultural backgrounds by offering diverse topics and having multicultural arts managers on boards of management</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 1: Dual responsibilities model for career management of multicultural artists