

Cultural Skills research summary

Examining cultural skills gaps and shortages in Brazil

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Brazil's cultural characteristics offer an immense opportunity to develop its creative industries and, with them, add value to the services area and parts of the industrial sector. For this occur, however, it is fundamental to have a proactive project that brings together governments, federal agencies, the private sector, entrepreneurs from many different sectors, economists and representatives of the creative and cultural areas.¹



About this report

This report was created at the request of the British Council's Cultural Skills team with the purpose of assessing the labour shortage and the skills gaps of professionals from the cultural sector in Brazil, particularly in the areas of performing arts, visual arts and music. The research was carried out in five stages from December 2015 to June 2016 and included: desk research, interviews (face-to-face and over the telephone) with more than 100 experts, an online questionnaire completed by more than 100 people, four focus groups and the assessment of information about courses in the cultural sector offered in Brazil. The interviews took place in the cities of Belo Horizonte, São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Recife, Salvador, Manaus, Porto Alegre and Brasília.

The information gathered here aims to provide a solid foundation for the development of programmes and products in order to face the challenges associated with the main topics of this report. This also includes suggesting public and private sector partners who are able to design and implement these programmes in partnership with the British Council.

It is important to note that the research was subject to limitations and uncertainties that are beyond our control. Subsequently, the research was purposed with providing illustrative and informative insights into emerging skills gaps and shortages, but is not meant to be a fully comprehensive mapping of the cultural sector in Brazil. Neither the author nor the British Council assumes any warranty for the accuracy, completeness or use of the findings. Readers are responsible for assessing the relevance and accuracy of the content of the research.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank British Council colleagues in the UK and in Brazil (in São Paulo as well as Rio de Janeiro) for the guidelines, suggestions and the contacts given, which were essential for a job of this scale. The British Council Cultural Skills team is also tremendously grateful to all external partners and professionals, who generously contributed their time for consultations, including over 200 individuals who kindly took part in the research. Your contributions were invaluable in the writing of this report.

1 Goldstein, L (2010) 'Economia Criativa'. Available at: https://catracalivre.com.br/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/ECONOMIA_CRIATIVA_LIDIA_GOLDENSTEIN.pdf

Foreword

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From museums to music, fashion to film, the skills that support the artistic process are vital to the development of a thriving

cultural sector around the globe. Skills range from technical specialism, to leadership and management; policy and qualification development, to youth engagement and English language.

The Cultural Skills team strengthens cultural relations between the UK and the rest of the world through sharing knowledge and developing mutual benefit. With UK and international partners we build sustainable cultural skills programmes that develop the skills of those practitioners and institutions across the whole of the UK and internationally, supporting the artistic, social and economic benefits of a thriving and dynamic cultural sector.

Over the past four years, the ambitious Transform programme, led by the British Council in Brazil, has held capacity building as a key priority, and the work of the Cultural Skills team complements this. The long-term commitment of the team to continue working in Brazil, both building on pilot programmes and developing new programmes in direct response to this research, will support the legacy of the Transform programme and work to support the sector in Brazil, helping to create a stronger, more prosperous cultural sector.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simon T Dancey', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Simon T Dancey
Director, Cultural Skills team

Foreword



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Within the cultural and creative sectors that contribute to the Brazilian economy, a key factor for success is the combination of different and complementary roles, whereby all individuals have the relevant skills to support and bring out the best in one another. One of the challenges faced by the cultural sector is the lack of robust data at its disposal to identify areas of expertise or improvement, and the associated challenge of analysing available data and presenting it in a concise way that makes sense to those who wish to support or invest in this sector. The research carried out by the British Council's Cultural Skills team fill a major gap in the Brazilian cultural sphere by providing information about competences that professionals and young people are lacking – competences that, once developed, may result in the further

success of the sector. This report is therefore relevant for future professionals, entrepreneurs, entities and organisations; it is important for everyone that operates, believes and has as their mission to make contributions so that the Brazilian cultural sector can reach its full economic and human potential.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, flowing loop that ends in a long, sweeping tail.

Ana Clévia Guerreiro
Assistant Manager – Sebrae

Ana works in the area of strategy development at Sebrae and supports partnerships and strategic alliances for strengthening small businesses in several sectors, including the creative industries (audiovisual, communication, design, music and games).

Introduction and overview

Brazil is in the midst of some challenging times, both politically and economically. Besides international problems such as low oil prices and the economic downturn in China, the country is also trying to deal with the revelation of widespread corruption involving some of the richest businessmen and some of the most powerful politicians in Brazil; a growing fiscal deficit, undermining the country's credibility in the financial market; and a political fight between the main political parties. As a result, Brazilian GDP may fall for two years in a row for the first time since the 1929 crisis, and the elected president has been impeached.

Following a period of steadily increasing public funding to the cultural sector between 2003 and 2013, these recent political and economic challenges have resulted in a significant impact on the sector. Federal, state and municipal funding have seen a sharp decrease and private investments (mainly through the national incentive law, the Rouanet Law) have also dropped.

Despite the crisis and the obvious impact it has had on cultural sector funds, the majority of research respondents believe that the area will grow, in terms of artistic output as well as in terms of mainstream audience engagement, after this period of turmoil. It means that, for them, the progress achieved in the past three decades has made the sector more resilient – an achievement also paved by re-democratisation in the late 1980s, economic stability in the late 1990s and the country's growth in the last 15 years, as well as steady improvements in income distribution and access to basic education.

This progress over the last three decades was characterised by factors such as strong institutionalisation (many municipal departments have been created, the National Culture Plan and the National Culture System² were introduced), measuring the economic value of culture, an increase in public and private investments (notwithstanding the recent plunge), more widespread access to artistic production and diversification of partners and cultural production.

However, these advances were not consistent over the period or across the country. The sector, indeed, still faces important challenges, as shown in the series of interviews for this research and detailed in this report. These challenges are likely to become more difficult in the short term, but for many the crisis also presents an opportunity. We may be in one of those rare moments when alternative solutions can finally succeed. Maybe, this is the moment for culture to be brought to the table as an equal partner.

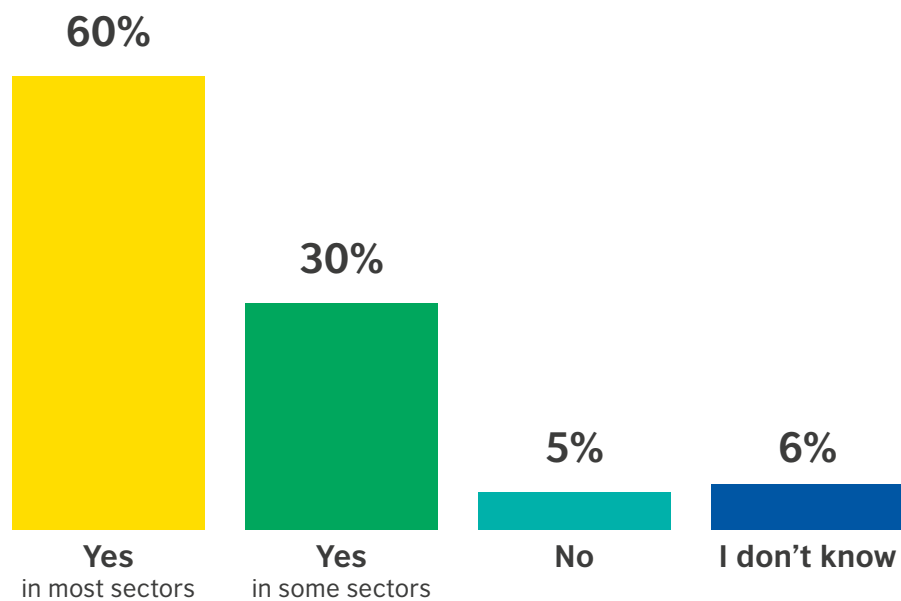
² The National Culture System is a management process in which the federal, state and local levels share policies and make joint decisions. See www.cultura.gov.br/sistema-nacional-de-cultura



Key findings

Most respondents noted that there is a shortage of professionals and young college students who are suitably trained to work in the cultural sector. These gaps are more apparent outside the country's main cities of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro.

Does the cultural sector lack trained professionals?



Note: figures do not sum 100% due to rounding.

Cultural management covers a range of skills

In relation to specific skills gaps in the sector, the major issue is cultural management. Concern with 'management' was identified as one of the main shortfalls in the training of those working in the sector as well as in the search to identify the types of professionals that the respondents have greater difficulty hiring.

Understanding what is meant by 'cultural management' was one of the critical points of the research. It appeared early on in the interview process, often in answers related to the main problems of the sector, regardless of whether the respondent worked in the private or the public sector or had more or less contact with the music business, visual arts or performing arts. The term was either mentioned directly or through synonyms, such as 'planning', 'financial planning' and 'administration', or through specific roles such as 'producer', 'executive producer', or 'production director'. It was also behind expressions such as talking about the individual who gets the project 'off the ground', someone who develops the project 'from start to finish', or someone who has a 'global vision'. During the focus groups, we were able to group the various functions associated to 'management' into three main blocks.

The first of these are financial, administrative and planning issues. This involves fundraisers, executive producers, public managers, producers, good accountability services, specialised accountants and administrators.

A second group was communication: mainly digital media, media relations, marketing and content production. All agents perform these services with more or less structure, but in general do not feel satisfied with them. Communications and project dissemination, as well as how financial and administrative matters work, are not covered in courses that train artists. The result is that the participants are ill prepared to work with the tools that can help a project's progress.

Lastly, there were a number of issues linked to regulations: labour rights, copyright, specific insurance and contract management. Some respondents said that various professionals with whom they work are unaware of the specific laws of their area. A few admitted that they could not follow all laws and regulations. Many producers claimed they did not get enough legal counsel to provide security for the project as a whole. *'The country does not have a consolidated area for cultural rights, which creates a number of problems. Many contracts are still made based on the word, on trust, which generates legal uncertainty'* said a São Paulo-based producer.

Arts training does not cover management

In the case of artistic training, there are good music, cinema, visual arts and theatre courses offered in the leading universities of the country. But they are often aimed at shaping only the artist; the musician, director, or actor. There is no emphasis on the training of professionals to be cultural managers and/or producers; the focus is on artistic language. Some of these courses, especially those offered in public universities, rely on experienced professors and attract well-educated students with strong cultural backgrounds – that is, the children of the Brazilian intellectual elite. Some respondents, however, noted that this audience does not consider non-artistic matters as something that is essential to their work. Although this line of thought is on the decline, it is still prominent. It is usual for people studying in this area, with an artistic and humanities background, to consider management and finance as something boring, difficult or even inferior, something unnecessary in their training. There are a number of non-academic courses focused on these subjects, but they are not long term and generally created to address more immediate skills needs.

The performing arts sector was identified as having a much greater need in terms of training professionals, compared to other areas such as visual arts, music and heritage. This is unsurprising since it is the sector that tends to be least organised as a business and does not receive much public support, unlike areas such as museums and the heritage sector, and has been adversely affected by the advent of new technology. In contrast to the audiovisual and music areas, which, despite also being impacted, have gained new possibilities in the digital universe, the performing arts still depends on direct contact with the public.

Technical skills are lacking

The research also detected a lack of well-prepared technical professionals. In visual arts, what appeared most often were mentioned skills gaps in restoration, logistics/transport, exhibition installation, set design, lighting design and curating. In the performing arts, the most pressing areas include set design, lighting, stage direction, videography and audio engineering. In the music sector, the biggest skills gaps focused on sound engineers, instrument-specific specialists such as piano tuners (in classical music) and roadies.



The research identified several transversal skills gaps

The survey also identified some concerns that were consistent across all art forms: audience development, accessibility for professionals, as well as keeping up to date with the latest technological advances. Difficulties in the technology area came up in several interviews and were well summarised by one of the participants; *'technology evolves very quickly: the person learns today and in a few years it no longer works that way, it has totally changed'*. This need to update professionals who work in the field is a concern even for cultural agents associated with major institutions; *'I've seen my team look scared when they see some of the equipment that comes along with some productions'* said the director of one of the largest cultural equipment networks in the country.

The issue of accessibility is a major challenge for cultural producers and managers. The sector seems to

have the propensity and a great willingness to meet the needs of the public with special needs as best as they can, however, they lack basic information for this to result in effective actions. *'In terms of accessibility, there are a lot of things to be done and there is no professional showing us how to do this,'* said one respondent. The concern is even greater when the sources of the funds, such as the incentive laws and the tenders, require producers to address issues relating to accessibility. The fact that there is a legal demand reinforces the need for managers and producers to find space in their agenda to become more informed in this area.

The subject of audience development is also a challenge, especially in performing arts, visual arts and classical music. The issue relates to public policies – particularly education – and agents explained that there is a need to encourage interest in cultural activities.



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Conclusion

The exploration of skills gaps and shortages in the cultural area has made it clear that, despite the progress of the past 20 years, there is still a huge need for training and capacity building. The challenge at this point is to identify which need should be prioritised according to the requirements of the sector.

There were several specific topics which emerged from the research as areas which should be included in any training programmes developed by the British Council in the future. Respondents were keen to know more about public policies, specifically to understand more about how cultural activity is supported by public funds in the UK and in other countries, and what lessons Brazil could take on board to enable professionals to strive towards a better organised approach to cultural activities. One interviewee in Rio de Janeiro commented that an exchange of experiences with projects tailored for poorer districts in India and South Africa, for example, might be useful for the institutions in these countries and in Brazil. This type of dialogue could help to facilitate more internationally informed policy debate between sector professionals and policymakers. Respondents were also keen to understand more about cultural indicators used in the UK, and how they could take those learnings and apply them to the situation in Brazil, so as to measure progress.

There is a certain amount of concern with audience development, mainly in relation to the visual arts (museums and heritage), performing arts and classical music. The topic here has three major angles: a) the work that the institutions or organisations (cultural centres, museums, theatres and orchestras) could do in their own areas and programmes to maintain their target audience and attract new audiences; b) actions that could be developed by the government to encourage better access to cultural assets, benefiting the whole artistic production and the cultural areas; c) the offer of arts and cultural initiatives as part of mainstream educational provision.

It was felt that there may be more that could be done to connect the cultural sector to other sectors, and as a result, strengthen the sector. One of the consequences of the lack of better management standards is the low capacity of the cultural area to interact with other areas such as tourism, education, science and technology, exports, etc., and even with government-related areas, such as those responsible for laws, labour issues, control and finance.

Several producers expressed an interest in learning more about the laws that govern the cultural area in the UK. References were made to labour laws and copyright issues, as well as issues related to transport and the import and export of cultural goods. There is much interest in knowing if and how other countries have managed to create a legal framework for both the public sector and the private sector, that is, are they able to account for some of the area's characteristics, such as the inconsistent working hours (many activities take place at night and weekends), temporary jobs and informal approach.

Accessibility was another issue pointed out in the shortfalls, although it was mentioned perfunctorily when the respondents were questioned about the possible steps that could be taken by the British Council. It is worthwhile noting that accessibility is understood as preparing facilities, materials and developing services to enable people with some kind of disability to attend plays, museums, exhibitions, etc. This was how the respondents addressed the issue.

Some of the key areas where programmes could be developed include cultural management, technical programmes and providing opportunities for international networking and sharing of best practice.

Structured management/cultural production courses: Except for those offered by Sesc-SP and Itaú Cultural, there are no other affordable structured courses that can give a broader overview of the cultural area. The many initiatives that have appeared in recent years are short or very short courses (with a duration of weeks, sometimes days) and aimed mainly at beginners. More experienced producers have no course options at their disposal.

Scholarships/exchange programmes: The professionals working in the area lack exchanges with institutions and foreign professionals. The suggestion here is to offer Brazilian cultural professionals the opportunity to exchange experiences with their peers in the UK and other countries.

Technical courses: There are not many of this type of course in the country. Even large institutions say they have difficulty finding good suppliers at times when there is great demand in the market.

Technical culture-specific English courses: It is not unusual for professionals in the cultural area to have difficulty understanding specific terms used in artistic productions and/or cultural management activities. Demand exists across the cultural sector, but it appeared most often in music and large productions in performing arts.

Management of festivals: The management model underpinning music and performing arts festivals in the UK is broadly admired in Brazil. Introducing the model and establishing an exchange of local and British events would help a niche market that has recently become more popular in Brazil, and it would enable UK participants to learn more about ways of working in Brazil that could be adopted in the UK.

Working internationally: Brazil has a diverse cultural output but no consolidated know-how of how to access international markets more systematically. The idea is to help put the Brazilian artists and producers in contact with their peers in other countries.

Translation of reference works: Most of the literature relating to cultural policy and practice in Portuguese has been translated from French, American or Spanish. Translation of works from the UK into Portuguese would offer the opportunity to managers, academics and Brazilian students to access, in Portuguese, literature about cultural management, cultural production and creative economy from a UK perspective. The works could be academic, in essay format or in more practical formats.

In general, respondents also commented that any programmes developed as a result of the research must adhere to specific standards, regardless of the subject matter. Programmes should be relevant to the needs of small- and medium-scale producers or institutions, not just aimed at the large-scale organisations. Equally, programmes should not be solely focused on the two main cities of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, but also provide provision for other cities too. Respondents also stressed that projects or activities should be connected to the Brazilian reality, and case studies should be relevant. Furthermore, case studies should not just present the finished outcome, but should outline how a project was done, including specific details about how many people were involved, and what worked or didn't work, so that a project can be adapted and replicated by Brazilian participants. Finally, it was also suggested that good quality materials should be produced to accompany programmes which participants can take away with them, either in physical or digital form, so as to better disseminate knowledge.

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