

Career pathways for a community artist/cultural practitioner

This worksheet provides advice and guidance on how to build a career in community arts/cultural animation.

Tools & resources

Career pathways should motivate people throughout their career and not just at the start. Regularly review your progress and keep asking yourself why you are doing this work.

Top tip

Do several things at once. Often, people have a part time job in a different area to earn income whilst they gain experience in community arts/cultural animation through unpaid placements.

Help & advice

Get help and guidance from someone who works in community arts/cultural animation. You could ask them to be a mentor, providing advice and help at regular intervals, or you might set up a more informal relationship. They could offer support, business advice, supervision or reassurance.

Regularly look at Briefs or Person Specifications for projects that are of interest to you and even if you don't apply become familiar with the skills they are looking for.

Identify the skills, knowledge and experience you need and make a plan. This might involve:

Understand why you want to work in community arts/cultural animation:

If you have a particular set of skills, you can make lateral moves between different organisations doing similar roles to develop your set of skills.

If you are committed to a particular cause, you can look for a "foot in the door" with an organisation that works in this area and move between different jobs in the same organisation or cause.

Consider switching between different sectors. community arts/cultural animation opportunities appear in the cultural, public, education, health and other sectors.

Be flexible and prepared to take on different kinds of short term, interim, assistant, intern or volunteer jobs to build on your skills, knowledge and experience.

Education, training and qualifications offered by Universities or Colleges.

Getting a "foot in the door" with an organisation to gain some experience, through a job as an Assistant or Apprentice.

Gaining unpaid experience as a volunteer or intern.

Joining a NGO/Charity initiative that provides work placement opportunities.

Do you have a set of skills that you want to develop?
Is there a particular cause that you are committed to?

Think about...

... whether it is the right career for you. A lot of your working time will be spent leading community activities at evenings and weekends. Residencies might involve working away from home for extended periods of time. The work is often offered on short term, self-employed contracts with little job security. However, some jobs in the public, education or health sector can provide more job security and include elements of community arts/cultural animation work.