

# LET'S WORK TOGETHER



Sharing and Shaping Collaboration in the Arts

## CONFERENCE NOTE

Let's Work Together was a national conference of leading arts sector figures interested in sharing good practice and some of the critical understanding needed to realise future opportunities for collaboration, both within and beyond the sector. It took place on Tuesday June 21st 2011.

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## OPENING PLENARY

### SPEAKERS

Mick Elliott, Chief Executive designate of the RSNO and former Director of Culture, Department of Culture, Media and Sport (Chair)

Alan Davey, Chief Executive, Arts Council England (ACE)

Virginia Tandy OBE, former Director of Culture, Manchester City Council

Alastair Upton, Chief Executive, the Bluecoat, and LARC member

#### **Mick Elliott**

- Conference to look in detailed and open way at what it takes to collaborate and explore some concrete outcomes.
- Research shows that cooperation improves quality of Higher Education: academics get more articles published, students do better; in business people's salaries increase and individually, cooperation improves creativity, self esteem, communication etc
- But cooperation/collaboration takes time to develop trust.
- We question collaboration because we are precious about organisational boundaries, we fear competition, it takes hard work, empathy. Those who are willing to invest are prepared for this. Egos should be left at the door.
- In times of plenty and austerity, cooperation will attract public and private investment.
- How can cooperation and partnerships deliver real practical outcomes?

#### **Alan Davey**

- Historic preciousness of arts organisations and benefits of collaboration are not immediate – it needs to be worked at.
- We're at significant time re: arts funding and National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs). We can now show world what we can do together to improve resilience in the sector. Cultural organisations are not against change but are looking for a common agenda to make that happen. This is now happening.
- There is no easy answer. We can't say we'll collaborate and everything will be OK – it's hard. The financial value often looks quite small but we just have to make the best of the small financial gains – to show that we can do it.
- Can we do things differently? Can we be generous, if we're a big organisation, to help smaller ones?
- As we're looking at different funding streams we're looking at how to push organisational boundaries so that we can make more of the best art and are more able to thrive in difficult times and not give in. If we don't work to help ourselves, we can't show the Treasury that we're worth helping.
- Arts Council short term measures: Sustain – did good to prepare people for now. Thrive – new ways of people working together – 21 projects – some successful, some not. Liverpool was a great success. Sometimes you don't get immediate results. One was successful – Theatre by the Lake which is now becoming a NPO.

Idea behind Thrive was to increase self sufficiency; help organisations become less passive, shape their own destiny. We've learned from Thrive how to improve resilience. When we look at funding agreements we'll ask organisations to think of working with other organisations. But we can't force it.

- We're asking people to take a civic responsibility – like a civic revolution. But it's hard times.
- ACE now taken responsibility for MLA so now we can have a more coherent approach to the sector. Not sure yet how it will shape up – but there's lots of opportunities. We'll be partnering and learning lessons from partnering.
- Partnership and collaboration are buzz words but they're full of possibility and you have to work at them. We must try things, work differently.

### **Alastair Upton**

- There are things we can't do on our own and that work much better with others. There's lots to be gained both institutionally and individually.
- Let's not be driven by fear, but by something more exciting.
- Bluecoat audiences come both for what we do and for what our partners do. So we don't control how people see Bluecoat – we can't control the brand. People see it how they want to.
- The thing about collaboration is that you don't get control but you get responsibility.
- Bluecoat is a collaborative institution internally and externally. We share two members of staff with a LARC member. Now other organisations are doing the same. We collaborate with retail centre Liverpool One. We now get into their marketing, which we would have never got the opportunity to do. We collaborate with a local charity – they use us for some of their arts delivery eg. free school project – Bluecoat will provide the arts delivery as part of the curriculum.
- LARC was set up with vision to make 2008 Capital of Culture work as there was a big fear it wouldn't have done otherwise.
- LARC meets every 2 weeks and Liverpool City Council s attends– so the arts are embedded in local strategy.
- We'd never be able to do the research we're doing without collaborations. We haven't however done any research around the outcomes of our collaborative work ....
- What drives collaboration is a vision, a belief that joint efforts are good and a generosity to make it work.

### **Virginia Tandy**

- You need a common purpose to unite you.
- Arts Council England has to work out, having absorbed the MLA, if the Great Art for Everyone strategy is also the strategy for the MLA too.
- Arts is flat lining: see Taking Part survey and the Paul Hamlyn Whose Cake is it? report which shows how audiences view the arts. And now we have Local Enterprise Partnerships which have no cultural representatives.
- We can no longer access some of the money we used to be able to and are having to work in ways that are not representative of the arts sector.

- Work needs to be done around learning. There are big changes in education. Commissioning is key. Education departments in local authorities are feeling the pinch. The question is, how do we get the best out of education budgets to develop audiences?
- In reports on Tourism culture is mentioned but not highlighted. Visit Britain has no cultural representatives on the board.
- There is work to do re: philanthropy. Philanthropists only talk about sponsorship and what's in it for them, but there are other things in the middle like co-investment. We need to educate philanthropists.
- Cultural sector needs to make sure relationships with local authorities are rich in good times and bad, not only approach them when they are in trouble, which is what happens now. Culture needs to contribute to civic life as well, so the idea of National Portfolio Organisations taking a civic leadership role is good.
- Local authorities need to be clear about what they want from culture – they need a common agenda.
- Now the National Portfolio Organisations competition is over, we need to start sharing audiences and learning from our data – we can't be credible externally if we don't know our audiences and where the crossovers are across institutions. How can we be credible within local authorities if between us we don't know who collectively uses our services?
- There should be a more common/open use of data. Lots of places are already seeing the benefit of that.
- We need to attend to the creative economy. We mustn't lose practitioners. We mustn't lose education/talent. We must use what we've learnt from Find Your Talent to attract new audiences. Renaissance in Manchester has driven the sector – has given us models to spin out and opportunities for arts organisations to take lead in development.
- Don't underestimate depth of adaptive change – how much change will need to happen? What is your immunity to change professionally and personally? – you'll be really challenged.
- I hope what is left of the legacy of the Cultural Leadership Programme budget is used to make all these changes happen.

## RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM DELEGATES

### **Virginia Tandy**

- Are there philanthropy/ investment opportunities for business/enterprise we're not thinking about? Perhaps Arts Council England should have an entrepreneur in residence? Which might also help practitioners – we have a moral duty to enable practitioners to flourish as much of the funding available to them has now gone.

### **Alan Davey**

- We're looking at different models of funding. Younger donors expect more involvement. Venture philanthropy – which gets return that could go somewhere else in the arts.

- We're seeing the next 3 years as an experimental journey. Arts Council England's 'usefulness agenda'.
- New Renaissance programme for museums is about to be announced as part of core museum concept. We want to work more closely with Heritage Lottery Fund and there is now funding for digital innovation with NESTA.

#### **Alastair Upton**

- Bluecoat works with charity and company. It's kind of easier than working with people from within the sector as everyone has a different agenda and nobody wants to have an input into our artistic agenda. We're still looking at other collaborations across different sectors.

#### **Virginia Tandy**

- Collaborations with organisations outside the sector only work if cultural organisations really understand what those organisations are about and what their agendas are. Need to take time to do this. If you try and work with others on your terms, it won't work – you need to understand the other's point of view.

#### **Alan Davey**

- We want people to be more grown up about sharing audience data. The economic argument is local government's priority – but it's more than economic – it's more about regeneration and engagement in the broader sense. Regeneration is so real for local government and therefore it's very real for funding too. Now we have to get our act together re: how we apply for money and we've got to help cultural organisations do that too and show LAs the impact we're having re: local regeneration.

#### **Alastair Upton**

- LARC got outside help to see how we could work together and there was no collective case to share services. My worry is that those people who are going to be forced to share services are the smaller, weaker organisations and it's difficult to do this from a position of vulnerability and not strength.

#### **Mick Elliott**

- Is there an agenda re: Arts Council England and local government driving collaboration? Collaboration needs to be driven by the cultural sector itself. How much do we need government and funders to drive it and when do we tell them to back off?

## WORKSHOP ONE: COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP, CIVIC LEADERSHIP

*The development of leadership skills and capacity in the cultural sector has had significant investment in the last decade. New models and approaches to leadership are emerging, many of which have collaborative working at their heart. Arts leaders are also stepping outside their organisations to take up new roles in their cities, towns and communities. This workshop explored models of leadership in collaborative practice, including 'collective' leadership, and looked at how leadership works in a partnership environment.*

### SPEAKERS

Sue Hoyle - Clore Leadership,

Carol Bell – Newcastle Gateshead Initiative

Michael Eakin – Royal Liverpool Philharmonic and LARC

Althea Efunshile – ACE

### MAIN EXAMPLES EXPLORED

Sue Hoyle: Clore Leadership, The Place, Common Purpose

Carol Bell: Newcastle Gateshead Initiative (NGI)

Michael Eakin: LARC

Althea Efunshile: ACE

Susanne Burns: Dance Training Accreditation Project

Sally Goldsworthy: Stratford Rising

### KEY REFLECTIONS ON PREVIOUS WORK

#### **Sue Hoyle:**

- Clore Leadership programme set up as response to crisis in cultural leadership
- The Place is an example of collaboration within an organisation – collaborative leadership
- People are no longer shy about discussing leadership

#### **Carol Bell:**

- NGI has changed over 20 years through collaborative leadership/civic leadership
- Shared belief in ability of culture to transform Newcastle Gateshead

#### **Michael Eakin:**

- LARC hasn't replaced what we can do as individual organisations, it focuses on what we can do better collectively
- LARC is 'a loose coalition of the willing'

#### **Althea Efunshile:**

- Arts organisations can and will collaborate successfully where there's a shared agenda

### LEARNING POINTS

**Sue Hoyle:**

- Importance of shared learning, not top down 'teaching'
- Partnership approach (e.g. Clore is strategic partnership between public and private philanthropy)
- 'Quietly making connections' is an important part of the job
- Collaborative leadership is well-established in the performing arts (eg organisations with artistic and executive directors) – can we learn from that experience?
- Fellowship is important – continuing peer networks that are non-hierarchical
- There is more diversity in leadership now
- Common Purpose example – look beyond your job description/title and consider a more civic role

**Carol Bell:**

- You have to understand the needs of different people, but you can't please everyone all of the time – different agendas not always compatible
- Civic leadership has been crucial (e.g. role of local authorities)

**Michael Eakin:**

- If we accept that the arts are central to the well-being of our communities then we have a responsibility to be engaged in broader agendas – civic leadership
- As publicly funded organisations we have a civic responsibility
- Learning from 19th century model of civic leadership – coalition between municipal and private sector
- LARC benefits from no single leader – leadership shifts according to current programme
- LARC is not a closed shop – regular meetings with local authority, ACE, other arts organisations
- Need significant commitment at CEO level
- Have the right idea and the money will follow

**Althea Efunshile:**

- No point in 'forcing' collaborations
- Collaboration is about cultural/organisational change as well as shared services
- Importance of engaging key stakeholders
- Huge amount of leadership time and effort required
- Importance of setting realistic expectations
- Need clarity on how to resolve issues
- Need clear articulation of what each organisation brings to the process and what they want out of it

**Susanne Burns:**

- Poor collaboration is worse than none
- The whole ecology of the sector is more important than individual organisations

**Sally Goldsworthy:**

- Cultural leaders are committed to (and knowledgeable about) their communities
- Collectively we have more influence on other agendas
- Consortium approach can help manage huge demands and workload in responding to specific initiatives (e.g. Olympics)

## KEY FUTURE CHALLENGES

- Boards need to be open to collaborative leadership possibilities – moving away from the ‘heroic leader’ model
- Challenge of people and capacity – collaboration can be expensive in time commitment
- Traditional forms of funding no longer available so need to look at new forms of collaboration e.g. entrepreneurial models
- Culture still not high enough on wider social and economic agendas
- Need to develop professional development/creative apprenticeships
- Recognise that collaboration is not necessarily cheaper financially
- Collaboration can mean making compromises or relinquishing control
- In a climate of increasing accountability need to find balance between risk and accountability
- Danger of arts organisations being ‘pimped’ into collaboration
- Need more sophisticated relationship with funders that isn’t just transactional
- Importance of learning the language of regeneration, place-making
- Need to understand when we’re collaborating and when we’re competing

## WORKSHOP TWO: ART LEADING THE WAY

*Artist-led and programme-led collaboration is not new; but much of the focus on collaboration in recent years has concentrated on operations and business models. Despite this, collective and partnership working is part of individual and organisational creative practice for many artists and programmers. This workshop explored art and artist-led examples of collaborative practice; it considered the role of creative practice in collaboration, and some of the challenges and potential opportunities which are emerging for practitioners, directors, producers, curators and programmers.*

### SPEAKERS

Lewis Biggs – Liverpool Biennial (Chair)

Robert Laycock – Consultant

Piali Ray – Sampad South Asian Arts

Mike Stubbs – FACT

Ella Ritchie - Intoart

### MAIN EXAMPLES EXPLORED

#### **Robert Laycock:**

- Helix Arts artist- led programme supposed to further develop a network for artists in the North-East of England. Artists need to be independent. The outcome of programme was not a new network but a greater collaboration between the artist in the area as well as a detectable improvement in the quality of their work.
- What worked: collaborations are always the better solutions
- What didn't work: difficult to manage expectations and the need of articulating these
- What is important: ability to share ownership, willingness to risks, trust, spot moments in time, articulate ideas clearly

#### **Piali Ray:**

- Partnership is a key strategy of Sampad while it contributes financially as well as increases mutual learning
- While diversity within a partnership is welcome it should not be fragmented

#### **Mike Stubbs:**

- Discussed 'Tenantspin' – project involving Fact and social landlord Arena Housing - a community engagement project which works with creativity and innovation
- Discussed an artist who worked with people returning from war as well as the 'Knowledge Lives Everywhere Initiative' of FACT
- What is important: there is little need of management help in regard to the communication between the artist and the community – most artists have a close relationship with their community, the need of articulation, media can act as a role of collaboration – TV was used as an example

**Ella Ritchie:**

- Discussed Intoarts and Studio Voltaire collaboration
- She feels strongly about the blurring between partnership and collaboration
- The end of the creative process is not predictable
- Collaboration is about people not organisations

**Joana Seguru:**

- Discussed her project 'Faster than sound', a collaboration between Aldeburgh and Lumin
- It is was a likely cooperation between unlikely partners
- The collaboration was not a chemical equation but explosion (A + B does not only gives us C but at times also D and E)
- The most important part of a collaboration is the initial goal

**KEY REFLECTIONS ON PREVIOUS WORK**

*How does being an artist influence the collaboration?*

**Robert Laycock:**

- He sees every collaboration at the start of it as a white cube – starting with nothing and imagining something

**Piali Ray:**

- Imagination
- Lateral solutions can be found more easily as an artist
- While working with other artists, at times a real connection can be found making the collaboration extremely fruitful

**Mike Stubbs:**

- Curiosity
- Understanding of time, space and materials
- Willingness to try out the impossible
- Not being attached
- Making provocation – asking difficult questions

**Ella Ritchie:**

- The value of the collective
- Artists are able to bring people into the process and not just into the product while the work is imbedded in the practice

## KEY FUTURE CHALLENGES

*Where are artists leading the way?*

**Ella Ritchie:**

- Notion of artists knowing the best is not correct, the community itself knows best

**Piali Ray:**

- Artists are not always leading but can empower others to participate

**Robert Laycock:**

- What constitutes our cultural value is democracy. Artist can contribute to a more democratic society by addressing inequality, issues on access and ownership and giving people a voice

*Future of Collaboration*

**Ella Ritchie:**

- Intoart is one of the NPOs that have been newly embraced by ACE funding, they applied together with Studio Voltaire (they have collaborated for the past four years)
- Our collaboration [with Studio Voltaire] has been an opportunity for the organisation to become more sustainable however the two organisations do not merge but keep their individual identities

**Mike Stubbs:**

- Collaboration with technology should be a daily activity. New media digitisation should not be confused with new media and media art which is an important part of contemporary art.
- The lack of financial funds makes collaborations less likely

**Piali:**

- Important to secure partnerships in financially difficult times
- Need to reinventing yourself, staying cutting edge
- A lot of people want to engage in partnerships as a direct result of the funding cuts (shared resources)

**Robert Laycock:**

- Important to understand the difference between collaboration and competition
- Need to embrace risk taking and leadership challenge
- Need continual investment in leadership management and ways of collaborating more effectively

**More generally:**

- The ego is the enemy and needs to be overcome in partnerships
- Passion is essential for collaborations

## WORKSHOP THREE: NEW MODELS, NEW MONEY

*Many people are talking about shared services at the moment. New business models and new income streams are being tested and developed across the sector. Shared capital facilities, box offices and fundraising functions are being explored. Social enterprises, mergers, consolidations and open consortiums – the range of possibilities is diverse. This session looked at how collaboration can enable not just survival, but a thriving ecology through new approaches to business models, relationships and income streams.*

### SPEAKERS

Robert Dufton, Paul Hamlyn Foundation (Chair)

Michael Lake, English Speaking Union

Faith Liddell, Festivals Edinburgh

Deborah Aydon, Liverpool Everyman and Playhouse

Naomi Russell, NR and Partners

### MAIN EXAMPLES EXPLORED

Michael Lake: Merger of Help the Aged and Age Concern

Faith Liddell: Festivals Edinburgh which leads the joint strategic direction of 12 major Edinburgh festivals

Deborah Aydon: Liverpool Everyman and Playhouse and members of Liverpool Arts Regeneration Consortium (LARC)

Naomi Russell: Dutch Masters Foundation coordinating support for the Concertgebouw Orchestra, Royal Picture Gallery Mauritshuis and Nederland Dans Theater

### KEY REFLECTIONS

#### **Nature of collaboration**

- Collaboration is rife in the arts already - it's like breathing, it comes naturally.
- Catalyst for collaboration is not always creative zeal, it is invariably financial but note state retreating on funding affects other sectors too.
- Can be born from a strategic concept.
- Most organisations experiencing radical change, they need to survive, ride the change, don't resist it.
- It's about where you can gain together, you need to agree a core purpose.
- Aim is to make life better for everyone so you remain in control of your destiny in changing circumstances.
- Other expressions of collaboration - merging, joint working, shared services, subcontracting, amalgamations.

- Critical mass: opportunities can be greater for smaller organisations.
- Collectively working to support each other can stutter the group.
- Failure is possible in some areas or for some collaborators; there might be some amendments to work groups or possibly departures.
- It helps to enjoy the complexity of collaboration and to have faith.

### **Organisation**

- Setting up a charity can be a slow process.
- Size of board impacts on accountability, agreement seemed to favour smaller numbers.
- Governance structure might need to be different within organisation to suit aims eg separate company and board.
- Don't have to buy in to everything as fundamental differences exist so include arrangements for power to veto.
- Establish working groups, work on communication and understand that smaller partners might not be able to attend all the meetings.
- Examples of work groups: Marketing, Programming, Innovation, Sponsorship/Fundraising, Talent Development, the Environment and Professional Development.
- Build support for working groups and assist with development of policy/ideas/strategy.

### **Gains**

- Assists with advocacy and ability to act as a lobbying voice.
- Can increase profile of collaborators which is attractive for artists and creative talent.
- Engagement with new audiences.
- Programming is stimulating and exciting.
- Threats and opportunities become shared as a core purpose has been agreed.
- Learn about connecting disciplines.

### **Finance**

- Review Business Model, think differently and bigger.
- Cultivate appetite to take steps with outside investment, social investment/landlords.
- Demonstrate sound business case and plan for 5 to 10 years.

## **LEARNING POINTS**

### **Nature of collaboration**

- Collaboration is a cosy word. Don't be disillusioned, it's hard and tough, it requires sensitivity and perseverance.
- You need to provide mutual support and learn together. Not an end in itself, there needs to be shared purpose. Be agile not fragile.

- Try to anticipate the future and work proactively. Relationships need respecting and nurturing.
- There will be some fundamental differences so in times of disagreement be resilient and return to the core purpose.
- Collaboration can dilute and needs reinventing. Needs real vision about what's trying to be achieved and the shared aims. It is possible there can be impact for the worse on some and the collaboration re-sizes.

### **Organisation**

- Establish rules for veto.
- Think through due diligence.
- Assess implications for Intellectual Property.

### **Programming**

- Programming and audience development is stimulating and can be competitive.
- Least successful co-productions are driven by pragmatics, works better to have shared artistic vision driving the collaboration.
- Seek partners with experience.

### **Finance**

- Fundraise together and individually using your own attributes to engage potential funders.
- You might expect fundraising together diminishes individual opportunities but it doesn't.
- Social investment is looking for a return though there was an example of receiving an interest free loan so formulate sound business case and examine the long term.
- Follow up philanthropic initiatives and ideas.

## **KEY FUTURE CHALLENGES**

### **Nature of collaboration**

- Don't overreach yourselves.
- Match make collaborative capacities.
- Look to collaborate with expertise.
- Learn to cope with uncertainty.
- Feel comfortable with the agreed principles and aims.
- Broaden focus to maintain stability of everyone involved.

### **Finance**

- Improving attraction to all forms of investment to offset decline in public funding.
- Sourcing enterprise capital and social landlords.
- Appetite for new money is the key.
- Ask yourself - what will be the commercial impact for the future?

- Ensure the creation of ideas leads to the generation of income.

### **Organisation**

- Enhancing not distorting the brands of collaborators.
- Quality due diligence assessment.
- Intellectual Property complications.
- Training initiatives for development of collaborators and their teams to assist with change and maximise benefits and results.

## WORKSHOP FOUR: OUT ON A LIMB

*Collaboration in rural arts settings can be challenging, but is often fundamental to the way in which artists and organisations in smaller and more isolated communities operate. The geographical spread of audiences and assets is, however, not the only challenge to successful collaborative working. This session explored how collaboration works in rural settings, the new business and artistic models being tested and the range of future opportunities to extend the innovative work which is already taking place.*

### SPEAKERS

Alison Edbury, &co

Patric Gilchrist, Theatre by the Lake

Mike Hoskin, Dorset County Council

Chris Heighton, Lincolnshire One

### MAIN EXAMPLES EXPLORED

#### **Alison Edbury:**

- Rural arts on tour – supporting network
- Arts Forum (in North Lincolnshire) – agency network

#### **Patric Gilchrist:**

- Theatre by the Lake

#### **Mike Hoskin:**

- Dorset Cultural Strategy

#### **Chris Heighton:**

- Lincolnshire One Programme:
- Collaboration on art centres and venues
- Cultural festivals collaboration

### KEY REFLECTIONS

#### **Alison Edbury:**

- The purpose of the on tour network is to bring professional live theatre, music, dance, comedy, puppetry and creative workshops into rural communities. To provide a professional product.
- Arts forum targets very specific groups through collaborative campaign to promote audience engagement and was encouraged to think more ambitiously about what organisations can achieve.

#### **Patric Gilchrist:**

- Small rural organisations need to have enough capacity (staff) if they are to be successful in the partnership/ collaboration

- Profile raising, public relations and advocacy are very difficult for a small organisation. Art organisations not good in dealing with press and media.

**Mike Hoskin:**

- The key to our future lies in organisational development and change.
- Putting the cultural strategy at the heart of the community was absolutely vital. This led to achieving two Local Area Agreement targets one for economy target and National Indicator 11 target to increase engagement in the arts.
- Persuaded the Dorset Strategic Partnership to invest £100, 000 in organisational development.
- Core strategy group based on 4 rules/principles: increasing engagement in the arts is a good thing, collaboration will work where more can be achieved together than as individual organisations; Meetings were entirely voluntary, Assumptions should always be challenged

**Chris Heighton:**

- Collaboration involved 12 venues with mixture of programmes
- Collaboration focuses of several areas: commissioning and co-commissioning, participation, audience development, marketing, resource development.
- Cultural festivals collaboration based on 2 key activities: 1. Sharing resources (Physical, intelligence, having a lobby role) 2.Creative collaboration (how to raise a quality of the work on collaboration, developing the creative offer of small organisations)
- Collaboration is vital for the leadership development

## LEARNING POINTS

**Alison Edbury**

- Attitude of engaged audience depends on people engaged in the promotional network
- Collaborative working and rural settings as a way of thinking how network works
- Network functions approach (the purpose of the network, key objectives, how it justifies its existence, why the involvement in this network would be useful for me, the role and functions of the network).
- The quality of audience experiencing the product depends on the symbiotic relationship between rural arts and its promoting network

**Patric Gilchrist**

- Collaboration/ partnership is difficult because of nature of rural organisations. However, what is important is real responsibility to explore their role in relation to the wide culture and to support this culture.

**Mike Hoskin**

- Increasing engagement is not about putting on more events or more marketing, but it is about the way in which an organisation deals with increasing audiences.

- Organisational development and change needs to be driven by people who believe in it - leaders

**Chris Heighton**

- Collaboration energises artists, an organisation, and audience

## KEY FUTURE CHALLENGES

**Alison Edbury**

- Use collaborations to be delivered through shared leadership, through innovation within collaborative networks
- Constantly involve networks
- Involving people from different sectors beyond the arts world

**Patric Gilchrist**

- Developing stronger relationships within particular rural context.

**Mike Hoskin**

- Future challenges are around outcomes based work.
- Engaging young audiences; access and participation, economy, environment, health & wellbeing and stronger organisations.
- Development of further cultural leadership programme

**Chris Heighton**

- Finding ways of spreading collaboration more broadly and making it sustainable.

## WORKSHOP FIVE – MAKING THE CASE – THE EVIDENCE BASE

*The research and evidence base for impact and effects of the arts has increased significantly in the last decade. But the arts sector often finds it difficult to compete with other sectors and does not always benefit from comparison. Last year DCMS unveiled the first phase of the CASE programme, and arts organisations are increasingly exploring a wider range of methodologies to make their own case. This session explored what works, what will be expected of the arts organisations in the future and how commissioning research together adds value.*

### SPEAKERS

Abigail Gilmore, Centre for Arts Management and Cultural Policy (Chair)

Dr Adam Cooper, DCMS

Alan Brown, WolfBrown

Catherine Bunting, on sabbatical from Arts Council England

Andrea Nixon, Tate Liverpool

### MAIN EXAMPLES EXPLORED

Dr Adam Cooper: CASE programme

Alan Brown: LARC report, 'How audiences and visitors are transformed by cultural experiences in Liverpool'

Andrea Nixon: Tate Liverpool: The LARC example of Joint Commissioning

Catherine Bunting: 'Everyday Participation and Cultural Values' research project

### KEY REFLECTIONS

#### **What does the evidence base currently look like?**

##### **Adam Cooper:**

- Culture and Sport Evidence programme is collaboration between DCMS, ACE, MLA, Sport England
- Subjective wellbeing - using economic analysis to evaluate government interventions
- Focus is on evidence, not organisations
- Cross sector collaboration with focus on shared priority – engagement in culture and sport
- Everyone is an equal partner, but DCMS has leadership role

##### **Alan Brown:**

- LARC report is looking at the microcosmic level – the impact of the arts experience on individuals
- Year long study, 25 arts events, 3,300 surveys
- Data by itself is meaningless, of more importance is the quality of conversation within the organisation that follows

- Objective of gathering evidence should be improving experience, not just reporting to funders

**Andrea Nixon:**

- Research can be confusing and divisive – eg in museum world audience research is considered different to ‘real’ research (academic study of objects)
- Need to agree in advance what you’re going to measure and how you will use the results
- Difficult to find measures that work across different cultural organisations
- ACE/Lottery funding should be applied to help organisations join up and further develop audience research.

**Catherine Bunting:**

- Much cultural investment currently in established forms – theatre, galleries etc
- If you don’t engage in these you are considered a non-participant in cultural activity
- But many people are involved in other ‘under the radar’ cultural activities eg folk nights in pubs, community festivals, hobbies at home
- Aim of research is to scope this with the aim of reconnecting policy and practice with people’s everyday experience of culture
- Project grew out of AHRC workshop – ‘sandpit model’ of enabling people to develop new ideas for working together
- Research project itself is collaborative – 7 academics from 4 universities and 2 policy practitioners

**QUESTIONS**

**How to ensure research (eg surveys) doesn’t detract from the arts experience?**

- Larger question is exploring the role of research in an artistically-driven organisation
- Lots of different ways of eliciting feedback – needs to be beneficial to the respondent as well as the organisation
- Instead of tick box survey, ask audiences: ‘Did you leave with any unanswered questions for the artist? If so, what were they?’
- New technology means we have more opportunities for dialogue with our audiences

**In terms of sustainability, can organisations carry out research themselves?**

- DCMS needs to make it easy for organisations to use the existing intelligence
- Research teams don’t want to ‘parachute in’
- Needs to be a focus on the practical applications of research

**In the past there’s been a focus on the economic impact of culture, is there any crossover with research on intrinsic value?**

- CASE survey uses two ways of understanding value – subjective well-being approach, and quantifiable decision modelling
- Festivals Edinburgh – a study on social, environmental and economic value suggested that intrinsic value and economic impact are connected

## KEY FUTURE CHALLENGES

- Research should focus on learning something new, not making the case for what you already do
- Research is currently fragmented - we need more shared standards, common frameworks to develop collective body of evidence
- Too many short term research projects - need to address key research questions at a large scale and over long period of time
- Danger of being inundated with information - research isn't Googling and clicking on the first link
- We need clarity on the future of audience development agencies
- Collaborative learning is the future for organisations, not just academic research
- Developing a diagnostic capacity to understand what your community needs, and how that can influence your programme of activity
- Most of the knowledge in our sector is wrapped up in the minds of practitioners – we need more peer to peer learning opportunities
- The challenge of 'non-participants' – maybe it's us that's not participating and engaging with key communities, not the other way round

## WORKSHOP SIX – PUBLIC INVESTMENT AND COMMISSIONING

*The infrastructure of the public sector is changing rapidly. Future investment and commissioning processes will be altered. The location of decision-making will shift; communities will become more important in determining how funding decisions are made. This workshop explored how collaborative working can build relationships between the sector and public and private partners; how public services and priorities might be delivered in the future, and the kind of role the arts sector can play.*

### SPEAKERS

Claire Cooper, Mission, Models, Money (Chair)

Catherine Hennessey, Revolving Doors

Dave Moutrey, Cornerhouse

Tony Butler, Museum of East Anglian Life

Oliver Reichardt, NCVO

### MAIN EXAMPLES EXPLORED

#### **Catherine Hennessey: Revolving Doors -**

- Partnership is a learning process and it takes a long time to build. There might be different cultures between partners and you need to learn to work with that. Need to agree and share visions especially when they are different
- For partnership to succeed there has to be at least one individual with the passion and skills to lead the project.
- Positive impact on understanding different roles: Different services need to understand each other. Value of involving customers/service in designing service.
- Less positive aspects of partnership: It can mean funds just go to one partner.

#### **Dave Moutrey: Collaboration between Cornerhouse and Library Theatre Company.**

- Background for the partnership – both organisations needed better/new space. Collaboration is supporting degree of public leadership by supporting city council priorities.
- Experience proved the value of different organisations being able to connect with a 'bigger picture' – in this case the city council's vision for a vacant piece of land that it owned.
- Previous collaboration between theatre and Cornerhouse made collaboration easier.

#### **Oliver Reichardt:**

- There are a number of drivers at the moment in the public service agenda, such as Personalisation (building services around individuals), payments by results and commissioning for outcomes. There are a number of challenges ahead:
- The Big Lottery Fund is currently going through a review.

- There is an increase in the use of payments, based on results by the public sector, meaning a gap between carrying out the service and getting paid for it.
- A more diverse commissioning environment with local authorities having greater roles in some areas such as public health but less roles in others as the Government tries to devolve aspects of public life beyond local authorities to communities.
- There's more competition in all sectors; less funds to compete for.

### **Examples of collaborations**

- Collaborative consumption where organisations share staff skills, space, back office functions, stationery etc.
- Longer term partnerships built not around individual projects but longer term alignments and mutually beneficial activities.
- Cross sector partnerships with the private or public sectors, or different parts of the voluntary and community sector.
- Model example: Consortico – A group of organisations pro-actively came together so that when commissioning opportunities arise they already know each other and can move very fast to bid for them. It also means having a more diverse group of organisations to draw from and they know and trust each other.
- (Fran Toms, from Manchester City Council, commented that local authorities are in a state of shock, regarding cuts; and are moving quickly looking for new models for commissioning, which will change fundamentally. They ask for time and patience, organisations and local authorities need to move at the same pace.)

### **On payment by results:**

- There has to be a shared vision in collaboration, a bond between organisations and communication.
- Dave Moutrey: Reconfiguration of business models, look for ways of working not just with local authorities but with the whole world.
- Tony Butler: organisation development, what it means to work for the museum, clear idea of what you are/need/as an independent organisation so other bodies such as local authorities can jump in the bus.

## **FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES**

### **Oliver Reichardt:**

- Subcontractor model: one big organisation which subcontracts smaller ones.
- Increased collaboration and more mergers likely to occur.
- Pro active leadership is important: one or two individuals that make the difference.

### **Tony Butler:**

- Challenge of small scale partners that don't have the skills with this new landscape. Relationship with local authority
- Importance of being aware of your assets, not just things but social networks, audience, community.
- Less investment means we need to be more creative.

- Museum revenue grant: know your place, what you can do and centre in your locality, small organisation thinking big, develop skills to apply with other funders.

**Dave Moutrey:**

- Establish mutual need between local authorities and cultural organisation
- Re discover collaboration, open up to organisations, work network
- Think mutual, stop accepting new liberal economic models, there are other models that need to be explored.

**Catherine Hennessy:**

- Need to hang on to what we do well.
- Future will be defined by: less money; payment by result and subcontractual relationships
- Challenges lie in balance between collaboration versus competition; and clarity of vision versus following the money.
- Opportunities: Personalisation and necessity as Mother of Invention.

**Kathryn McDowell, of London Symphony Orchestra (LSO):**

- LSO experience of re-defining relationship with ten of local authorities in the East of London. Before partnership there was no formal or regular dialogue between partners. LSO conducted an audit to establish level of music provision in each area before developing a pilot project in second year. The two full years of the project since then have involved a major commitment of time and human resources from the Music Services – and the LSO has fundraised to support the engagement with members of the LSO, students from the Guildhall School and the production of a series of performances annually involving the young musicians, their teachers, and Guildhall School students being coached, mentored and performing alongside LSO players. All ten local authorities have prioritised this project at a senior level and the collaboration is on-going.

# CLOSING PLENARY

## PARTICIPANTS

Mick Elliott

Andrea Adams

Lewis Biggs

Robert Dufton

Michael Noonan

Dr Abigail Gilmore

Clare Cooper

## SUMMARY OF IDEAS AND ISSUES

### **Andrea Adams, Triumph. Chair - Collaborative Leadership, Civic Leadership**

- Leadership Collaboration is not forever but a point in time.
- Collaboration works best when it is harnessed around a common purpose and focused towards achieving that purpose.
- Being prepared to contribute to a wider agenda.
- Not just leadership but a culture of leadership that is prevalent in the sector.
- Balance of Risk and Accountability.

### **Lewis Biggs, Liverpool Biennial. Chair - Art Leading the Way**

- Why is it important for artist to lead the way? Because artists are good with starting with nothing and ending up with something.
- Organisations can learn and facilitate other organisations to learn.
- Collaboration involves a loss of power and control, which is swapped, with an increased sense of responsibility.

### **Robert Dufton, Paul Hamlyn Foundation: Chair - New Models, New Money**

- Collaboration is not an end in itself; need to keep an eye on the end.
- Flexibility is important
- Agile but fragile.

### **Michael Noonan, Consultant. Chair - Out on a Limb**

- Arts organisations in rural areas are usually small and fragile.
- Identify the rules and shadows of collaboration.
- Need for Collaboration to be voluntary.
- Should we collaborate only within the arts community or outside only? Answer: Both And! Both Internal and External!

**Dr Abigail Gilmore, Centre for Arts Management and Cultural Policy. Chair - Making the Case – the Evidence Base**

- Pitch in together and we get a better picture. Scaling up. Not top down but bottom and middle up.
- Sustainability: how do we make the best of our resources? Establishing Collaborative Learning.
- Not just concentrating on the mainstream but to put yourself outside the circle and think about the non-user or non-participant.

**Clare Cooper, Mission Models Money. Chair - Public Investment and Commissioning**

- Market intelligence.
- Need to start getting used to the fact that core funding will become a thing of the past.
- Role of the relationships. Relationships developed in the good times are now beginning to bear fruit.

**Vicki Young, MA Student, City University London. Rapporteur's Summary**

- Great sessions
- Time could be longer
- Question around use of workshop; could be structured differently to allow more participation.

## Q & A AND DISCUSSION

- Several issues raised around enabling and promoting good collaboration.
- Conference interest in what was going to be the result of the conference and how the information should be used.
- Learning should be taken back to the various organisations and delegates should continue to work together.
- Organisations should use their networks to cooperate more and compete less.
- Collaboration can produce more than just the intended outcomes but could also result in other desirable outcomes.
- Collaboration should consider Time, Turf and Trust.

## SUMMARY OF THOUGHTS

*The following are some of the closing ideas:*

**Andrea Adams**

- Collaboration and Leadership come from the top but works best when it is rolled out. Everyone is involved.

**Lewis Biggs**

- Artist-led collaboration should take us to social engagement.

**Robert Dufton**

- Outsider observation is very important.

**Michael Noonan**

- Opportunity needs new players to take space and form collaborative groups. Advocacy for the Arts is about advocating for a better quality of life.

**Abigail Gilmore**

- Good collaboration based on shared understanding.

**Clare Cooper**

- Don't sit back and wait for things to happen, be more creative, hang on to what you do well, be clear about your objectives as early as you can.

**Mick Elliott:**

- Do your part
- Make people feel wanted
- Bring people in from the outside to tell us what we're not getting right
- Learning from outsiders and we'll be richer for it.

**END**

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