

# What is Cultural Leadership?

Cultural leadership is the act of leading the cultural sector. Like culture itself, it comes from many different people and can be practised in many different ways. It concerns senior managers and directors in subsidized cultural institutions; public officials developing and implementing policy for the cultural sector; and a huge range of producers, innovators and entrepreneurs in small companies, production houses and teams. In the cultural world, nobody has a monopoly on leadership.

Leading the cultural sector is practised in two different ways. First, it concerns competently managing the organisations of the cultural sector, ensuring that they are financially viable, legal and with well-organised staff. Second, it means leading culture itself - making work, productions and projects which show different ways of thinking, feeling and experiencing the world - bringing dynamism to the economy and wider society.

Many of the challenges that cultural leaders need to navigate are common to those faced by leaders in other areas of social and economic life. How to stay solvent in an ongoing financial crisis. How to engage with digitally connected, networked individuals. How to work in less carbon intensive, environmentally sustainable ways. But cultural organisations are different from other organisations and as such face their own distinctive challenges.

## Challenges

Cultural organisations are geared towards producing new ideas. It is their production of these new ideas as performances, exhibitions, styles and sounds which makes them cultural. Balancing this priority, with the need to run a financially sustainable organisation and hopefully one that makes a positive difference to the world, is which gives cultural leaders a unique set of challenges. Here are some of them.

### *Describing value*

Unlike business leaders who can point to the bottom line, or leaders of charities who can measure their impact against a clearly defined social problem - leaders in the cultural sector face a constant struggle to explain and communicate the value of what they do. This task is made harder because the ideas cultural organisations produce are non-replicable. Because they can't produce the same play, song or installation over and over again, they have to inspire confidence in projects without precedent or known outcomes.

### *Working in networks*

Ideas thrive in loose networks rather than rigid structures, so cultural leaders have to too. This is why cultural leaders don't have to be at the head of big organisations to be important. Rather they often need to simultaneously operate in small companies, production houses and as loan-agents while being connected to rich and diverse networks of supporters, funders and collaborators. There is a complicated balance for cultural leaders to maintain.

### *Living dangerously*

Cultural sector leaders often have to place themselves in danger. The best cultural organisations produce ideas that make new ways of seeing, thinking and feeling possible - their work is an expression of human freedom. This can be a benign, quiet act, but it can often threaten vested interests and powerful elites - especially in illiberal political regimes

and places where giant-corporations hold the balance of power. Cultural leaders have to maintain a moral conviction and the ability to route-around, confront and subvert authority.

### *Social work*

The rise of free-markets, digital technology and the liberated individual have bequeathed a world saturated with design, media and rich, complicated forms of communication. Symbols are everywhere, used by individuals and organisations alike to define their politics, their values and their attitudes. With cultural expression so prominent there are huge opportunities for cultural leaders to make a positive difference to things that matter, but the strategies and tactics which they can use remain unclear.

## **Interventions in the UK**

For the last 12 years in the UK there has been a concerted effort to improve the quality of leadership in the cultural sector. What began at the end of the 1990s, as an attempt to extend conventional leadership training to leaders of cultural institutions, has today become a range of sophisticated, bespoke interventions which respond directly to the specific needs of cultural leaders across the sector. Support for cultural leadership today is as much about providing know-how to new and emerging cultural leaders, as it is about developing the relationships leaders need to progress in their careers, via the creation of professional networks, mentoring programmes and collaborative projects.

Provision for cultural leadership in the UK has been lead by the [Clare Duffield Foundation](#) who, since 2002, have run a variety of programmes which aim to offer skills and support to leaders in the cultural sector. Cultural leadership provision in the UK was also supported by a time-limited investment of £22m by the UK Government in its own [Cultural Leadership Programme](#) (CLP) between 2006-11. The programme was administered by [Arts Council England](#), [Creative & Cultural Skills](#) (a skills development agency for the creative and cultural industries) and the [Museum, Libraries and Archives Council](#).

Through the work of the Clare Duffield Foundation, the CLP and a range of other smaller interventions, provision in the UK for cultural leadership has focused on the following 5 areas.

1. Leadership programmes for the arts and cultural professionals
2. Development of independent agencies
3. Thought leadership in arts and culture
4. Innovation and entrepreneurship
5. Help for under-represented groups

### **1. Leadership programmes for arts and cultural professionals**

Short and long-term interventions that help cultural leaders develop the management skills required to run an organisation coupled with the networks and relationships they need to progress in their careers.

Between 2004-6 the Leading Networks Initiative of the [National Museum Directors Conference](#) created a self-sustaining network among leaders in museums which aimed to help them manage the changing political landscape, relationships with governing bodies and connections with the wider cultural community.

Each year the [The Clore Leadership programme](#) takes 25 fellows from across the creative and cultural sector on a 7-8 month customised training and support programme of mentoring, individual coaching, practical skills development with an extended secondment in an organisation outside the fellow's previous experience. Clore fellows are drawn from across the creative and cultural sector. The foundation has also recently launched a sister programme for the social sector - the [Clore Social Leadership Programme](#).

The Clore Duffield Foundation also runs intensive leadership development [two-week residential courses](#) for professionals from the creative and cultural sector with 5 years professional experience, as well as the [Board Development Programme for members of directors' boards](#).

Both City University in London and Liverpool John Moores University have recently offered [Masters programmes in Cultural Leadership \[pdf\]](#).

The Manchester Arts Managers Forum ran their [Leadership Innovation Programme](#) between 2008-10. The programme created two peer-networks with individual programmes for continuous professional development - one for senior management, another for emerging mid-career managers from Manchester's arts sector.

The [Step Change Network](#) is run by [The National Theatre](#), [Battersea Arts Centre](#), [The Young Vic](#) and [Nitro](#). It offers opportunities for early career-development for performing arts professionals through seminars, mentoring, master-classes, peer-learning and a secondment to one of the four organisations in the Step Change Network.

The [Future Leaders Programme](#) run by [Creative Scotland](#) currently offers a mixture of workshops, guest speakers and organisational visits, over 9 months to 10 arts professionals in Scotland each year.

## **2. Development of independent agencies**

The development of arms-length cultural agencies, who can guide the development of the creative and cultural sector.

In 2004 the UK government created [CCSkills](#) to oversee the development of skills in crafts, cultural heritage, design, music, performing, literary and visual arts. In 2007 CCSkills launched [Creative Choices](#) - an online portal which helps people in the creative and cultural sector to identify opportunities to develop their creative and cultural skills. In 2009 CCSkills published [A Cultural Leadership Reader](#) - a useful guide to cultural leadership approaches.

## **3. Thought leadership in arts and culture**

Discussions and debate about how the cultural organisations can play an active visible role in addressing and resolving social, economic and environmental concerns.

The CLP ran an extensive series of discussions and seminars for the cultural sector called [Dialogues on Leadership](#) which looked at; cultural leadership in the European context; the cultural sector's response to climate change; debates on diversity; and a look at the role of women in leadership in the cultural sector.

[Mission Models Money](#) a group campaigning for change in cultural organisations, run [Re:volution](#) a peer learning network designed to support arts and cultural organisations to

reconfigure their business model and rethink their outlook in response to new social, environmental and economic concerns.

#### **4. Innovation and entrepreneurship**

Programmes that support people to innovate and be entrepreneurial at the fringes of, or outside, established organisations. These initiatives usually encompass mentoring relationships, one-off workshops, collaborative projects, and exchanges.

Battersea Arts Centre currently offer eleven 16-25 year olds the chance to be part of their [Producers Programme](#) which gives them access to training, resources and space in the Arts Centre to develop their curatorial and programming skills.

CLP offered a series of learning-through-doing '[Peach Placements](#)' to emerging leaders in the creative and cultural industries. The placements offered a chance to work on a new project, outside of the awardees previous experience, which would develop their leadership skills by learning-through-doing. Placements were fully funded and lasted for 6 months.

[Arts and Business](#), who develop private and public partnerships for the arts, have organised a number of projects such as [Impact Unleashed](#) which placed artists and innovators from the cultural sector in residence in the commercial sector to realise creative projects together, to develop their skills and foster new ways of thinking.

As part of the CLP [The School for Social Entrepreneurs](#) ran a year-long course for [Social Cultural Entrepreneurs \[pdf\]](#) which helped cultural entrepreneurs to realise a vision for a new project through a programme of visits, witness sessions, a residential programme, one-to-one coaching and mentoring.

The [Institute for Contemporary Arts](#) ran a [Pecha Kucha Mentoring Programme \[pdf\]](#) for young creative entrepreneurs between 2007 and 2009. Participants were paired with an appropriate mentor and a programme of contact was devised specifically to their development needs.

[The National Endowment for Science Technology and the Arts Cultural Leadership Awards](#) gave 14 young creative entrepreneurs an international placement pairing them with influential cultural leaders - the programme encouraged participants to develop their outlook and behaviours by introducing them to different styles of leadership in different cultural contexts.

#### **5. Help for under-represented groups**

Targeted programmes of leadership support, similar to those outlined above but aimed at (a) parts of the cultural sector that are perceived to be poor at producing people who rise to positions of leadership and (b) groups in society who are under-represented in cultural sector.

The [Aarohan Network](#) was a network for 12 south-asian professionals with an interest in creating a leadership role for themselves in the cultural sector. It aimed to develop them through a programme of peer development and work placements.

As a part of the CLP Disability Action Learning Intelligence Hub for the Arts was led by 5 disabled arts managers and practitioners and ran workshops developing leadership skills within the arts sector across the country.

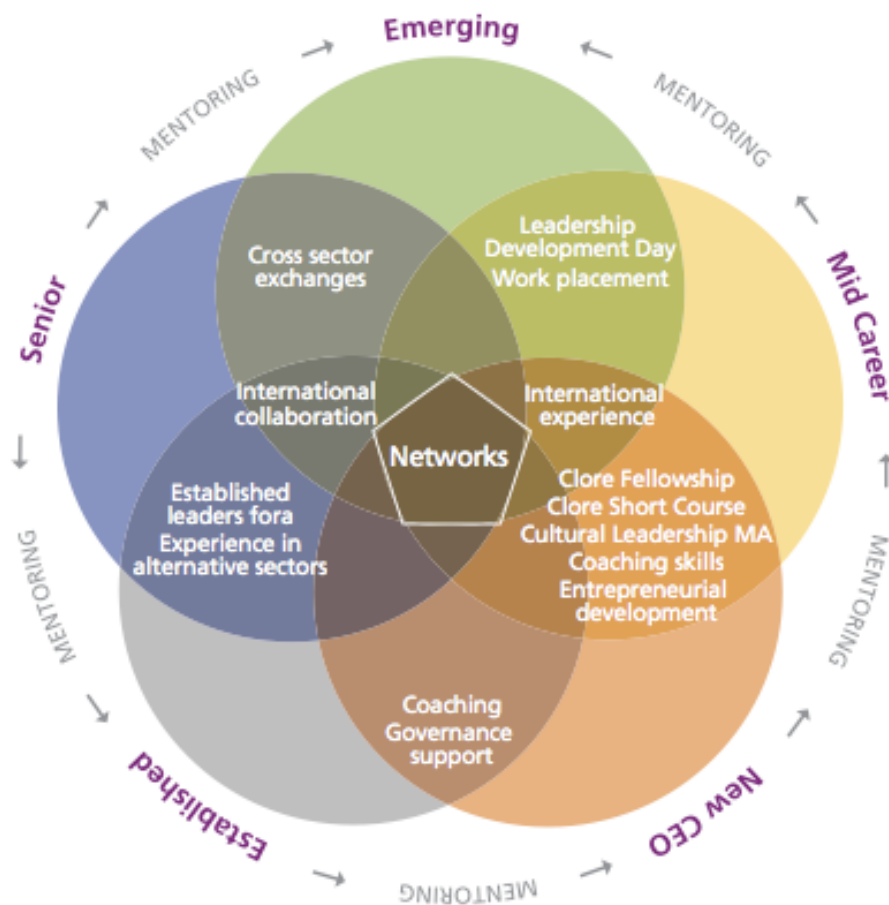
The [Powerbrokers](#) strand of CLP provided a national series of free one-day workshops to aspiring cultural leaders from African, Asian and Caribbean backgrounds.

Through support from CLP [Leadership Observatory Wales](#) supported the research and creation of a network to support 50 women in Wales from the cultural sector.

Today [Engage](#), the UK's an advocacy and support organisation for gallery education runs [Extend](#) - a programme which aims to help museum and gallery education specialists rise to leadership roles in the cultural sector.

## A Strategic Approach

An interim evaluation of the Cultural Leadership Programme conducted in 2008 set out the following Strategic Framework for developing cultural leadership in the United Kingdom. Although in straightened times funding for cultural leadership in the UK has been paired back it remains a useful model for how leadership can be fostered across the cultural sector.



## International Cultural Leadership and The British Council

*'My hope and what I find very exciting in this opportunity is that we can go beyond developing a new generation of technicians and managers in the cultural sector but we actually manage to develop change makers, magicians, people who are able to respond to a variety of complex, urgent situations whether they are community based or global based.'* Moukhtar Koukache, Ford Foundation

Since an extensive consultation in 2008 the British Council has sought to identify, celebrate and develop a new generation of cultural leaders around the world through a programme of international work placements, courses, fellowships, workshops and forums.

The programme aims to equip leaders with the skills to manage cultural organisations effectively, to nurture their desire to work in the most vital areas of social and economic life and to identify shared strategies for cultural work in a changing world.

The programme has given these emerging leaders access to the best arts-management know-how from the United Kingdom and involved them in an international conversation about the role culture plays in international relations, conflict resolution, urban development and sustainable economic growth.

The programme makes two offers to emerging cultural leaders:

1. Long-term placements, fellowships and networks
2. One-off training sessions and courses

### 1. Fellowships, Placements, Online Course and Networks

The programmes listed here have several features in common.

- Achieving membership of a network
- Receiving guidance from mentors
- Taking a work placement in another country
- Developing international collaborations
- Management skills
- Webinars
- Inspiring workshops and conversations

	Network	Mentors	Placement	Collaborations	Skills	Webinar	Workshops
China-UK Arts Dev Programme			●				●
Art Think South Asia		●	●				●
CLI	●		●		●		●
CL Innovation Studios	●			●			●
Accelerate		●	●		●		●
Cultural Heritage Fellowship	●	●	●				●
Cultural Exchange International			●				
YCE				●	●		●
Music Management Online						●	
TN2020				●			●

[China-UK Arts Management Professional Development Programme, 2010 -](#)

A placement programme, now in its 3rd year, which brings 20 Chinese arts professionals from the visual/design and performing arts to the United Kingdom for one month placements in cultural organisations, preceded by a five-day workshop. The programme is targeted at those seeking experience in company and venue management, marketing and audience development, artist development and support, programming and festival management, curatorial practice and exhibition space management, education and outreach, cultural and arts policy development, fund raising and sponsorship. It aims to foster collaborative projects between Chinese arts professionals and UK cultural organisations.

[Art Think South Asia Fellowship Programme, 2009 -](#)

The Art Think South Asia fellowship in India develops the skills, knowledge and networks of potential leaders in the cultural sector of South Asia over a year-long programme. The programme begins with a two week residential course followed by a four-week internship in a cultural organisation in Germany the UK or South Asia and finishes with a concluding seminar a year later for sharing and learning. It is supported by British Council, Goethe Institute and the [Khoj International Artists Association](#).

[Cultural Leadership International \(2009 - 2012\)](#)

The British Council's Cultural Leadership International Programme identified and developed emerging mid-career cultural leaders - people who will shape the future cultural life of their countries. Application and selection for the programme was made on the basis of a personal development plan outlining the applicants' existing skills and personal development needs. Once a part of the programme, members gained access to a series of peer-learning and networking opportunities that included; a funded placement in a UK cultural organisation; international workshops; places on short-courses; profiling and support from the [Creative Economy Programme online platform](#).

A strong emphasis was placed on workshops where issues of importance to the cultural sector could be discussed. In spring 2011, 30 participants met up in Paris to take part in '[Wanted Now! Cultural Rights](#)' a 4-day workshop discussing and sharing ideas about the role of culture in social integration and inclusion in fragmented cities. Later in the year 47 members gathered in Istanbul for '[Culture Matters](#)' a 4-day working group taking each of the following questions in turn: How can policy making support culture? What's the role of culture in social development? How is digital technology changing culture and the creative sector?

[Cultural Leadership Innovation Studios, 2012 -](#)

Cultural Leadership Innovation Studios is the current refreshed version of the British Council's Cultural Leadership International (CLI) programme. It places a greater emphasis on the Middle East and North Africa (all applicants are from the region) and on connecting with other innovators and entrepreneurs in the UK and the Middle East. The initiative aims to raise awareness of key issues affecting the cultural sector, to support small projects proposed by participants and strengthen the influence of the sector in the region. This year Innovator studios have been held in Dubai, Beirut, Cairo and Marseilles. There is a well supported Facebook group for the project and a few fledgling initiatives are starting to emerge from the programme. It is supported by the [Ford Foundation](#).

[Accelerate, 2009 -](#)

A tailored leadership initiative for talented Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people working in the creative industries which provides leadership development, mentoring and

industry placements in Australia and the UK. The programme is a direct response to the lack of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in senior positions in the creative sector. It consists of an intensive two-day course in Melbourne or Sydney followed by a three week visit to the UK for a work placement, mentoring and further training.

#### [The Cultural Heritage Fellowship, 2013](#) -

A collaboration between The British Council, University College London and Heritage Without Borders which offers a fellowship programme to mid-career museum professionals across the Middle East and North Africa. The programme aims to develop skills that help museum professionals engage with contemporary social and political issues and to develop international links on which future programmes could be developed. Fellows experience a residential learning session, a museum placement and one-to-one mentoring sessions. Participants in the past have come from Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Yemen, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Palestinian Territories and Syria.

#### [Cultural Exchange International, 2013](#)

A collaboration between The British Council and the Los Angeles Department for Cultural Affairs offering four fellowship grants for socially-engaged emerging cultural leaders in Los Angeles to conduct residencies of two to three weeks with host organizations in the UK. Each residency uses arts, culture or social action to promote shared economic and social purposes between global citizens.

#### [Young Creative Entrepreneur Programme, 2006](#) -

The Young Creative Entrepreneur (YCE) programme connects and supports entrepreneurial leaders in the creative and cultural industries. Selected entrepreneurs win a trip to the UK for a programme of meetings with UK industry experts, international networking, business skills training and invitations to key UK industry events with contacts. The project aims to seed lasting commercial and cultural collaborations. Successful projects that started in the Young Creative Entrepreneur programme include the first publication of Roald Dahl in Arabic, the founding of the Slovak Fashion Council and the transfer of a UK social enterprise youth magazine to South Africa.

#### [Music Management Online Course, 2013](#) -

A series of 7, 2-4 day webinars hosted by UK music industry experts which aim to develop key music management skills and bring international experience to middle eastern entrepreneurs in the music industry. The programme has been designed to follow the content of an masters degree in music management, giving participants an overview of the main skills required in the international music management scene.

#### [TN2020, 2008](#) -

The British Council's Transatlantic Network 2020 brings young influencers from North America and Europe together to develop future transatlantic global links. They are drawn from the cultural sector as well as civil society, science and the media. The network gathers for an annual conference which in the past has featured appearances from Richard Branson, Bruce Mau and William Hague.

## **2. Training, Courses and Experiences**

The British Council has also provided a range of workshops and one-off experiences that aim to provide short bursts of intensive leadership development around the world. These have included the following initiatives.



### [Mission 2062, Paris/UK](#)

A three-day workshop in Paris for 40 cultural leaders from 15 countries examining and predicting what the arts and the cultural sector will be like in 50 years time, developing new strategies for the future development of the cultural sector.

### [Strategy and Audiences, Armenia/UK](#)

A two-day workshop for 24 cultural managers at the *Golden Apricot International Film Festival*, providing guidance on strategic issues and marketing and audience development. The workshop was facilitated by Roger McCann, Director of NFA International, an arts administration consultancy and Hassain Currimbhoy from Sheffield Doc/Fest.

### [Business model canvassing, Russia/UK](#)

A two-day management workshop with Susan Royce, a cultural sector consultant, and Clare Middleton of the Hackney Empire Theatre for emerging cultural leaders from across the Russian Federation which gave an intensive introduction to audience development and financial models using a 'Business Model Generation' approach.

### [Effective branding, Venezuela/UK](#)

A two-day training workshop for 20 Venezuelan cultural leaders with a social mission on effective branding and communications skills run by Livity an award winning youth-lead communications agency from the United Kingdom.

### [Rethinking public space, SE Asia/UK](#)

A five-day workshop at the [Pervasive Media Studio](#) in Bristol bringing together 12 participants from SE Asia and the UK to look at playful interventions with creative technologies to rethink public space.

### [Cultural Management, Turkey/UK](#)

A week long cultural management workshop run by Al Mawred Al Thaqafy's of Cultural Resource, a cultural foundation based in Cairo. The workshop brought 21 students together from nine countries - Algeria, Egypt, Tunisia, Syria, Libya, Mauritania, Palestine, Yemen and Morocco - for an intensive week studying the principles and practice of cultural management.

## **Cultural Leadership around the world**

In recent years, with the support of other foundations and public funds, programmes that aim to support skills for cultural leadership have emerged in other countries around the world. Some initiatives include:

### [Advanced Cultural Leadership Programme, Hong Kong](#)

The Advanced Cultural Leadership Programme is the first cultural leadership programme in Asia and has been developed by The University of Hong Kong in collaboration with the Clore Leadership Programme in the UK. The course comprises of two five-day retreats and a two-day non residential course interspersed with one-off lectures and seminars. Participants in the programme are also expected to work on a task aiding the development of their leadership capacities which they will report back on at the end of the year. The course has 15-18 participants with 5 years experience of working in the cultural sector and is spread out over 1 year.

### [The Cultural Leadership Summit, Hong Kong](#)

Since 2011 the Hong Kong Arts Administrators Association and the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority (WKDA) have hosted an annual three-day conference for renowned cultural leaders from across the world. In 2011 the conference assessed 'what makes arts spaces work and why?', in 2012 it explored strategic thinking for creative organisations and this year the conference interrogates; how the value of culture is perceived in Asia; immediate challenges for the cultural sector in the region and how cultural leadership can be nurtured.

### [South African Cultural Leadership Hub, South Africa](#)

The South African Cultural Leadership hub is run by the Africa Arts Institute and offers ten-day training courses to arts professionals, government officials responsible for culture and people implementing cultural policy. Training courses focus on the social and political context of working in the cultural sector in Africa covering themes such as international and African cultural policy instruments, international opportunities and challenges for the African creative sector and development indicators. All members have to be from English speaking African countries. The hub is intended to be the start of a wider network encompassing Casamemore in Morocco, serving North Africa; by Groupe 30 Afrique in Senegal, serving West Africa; by Doual'art in Cameroon, serving Central Africa; and by The GoDown Arts Centre in Kenya, serving East Africa.

### [Salzburg Global Forum for Young Cultural Leaders, Austria](#)

The [Salzburg Global Forum](#) is based in Schloss Leopoldskron in Salzburg and aims to bring world-leading thinkers and innovators together to find creative solutions to some of the world's most complex problems. Its invitation-only 'Global Forum for Young Cultural Leaders' run in partnership with [National Arts Strategies](#), is directed at 50 young leaders aged 25-35 with three years experience in cultural institutions across the world. The course focuses on building the following skills: team-building, risk-taking, innovation, mentoring, collaboration, articulation of mission, stamina, involvement in civil society, managing relationships, and future vision.

### [The Getty Leadership Institute: NextGen, United States](#)

The Getty Leadership Institute at Claremont Graduate University provides a variety of courses and programmes to leaders in museums. Next Generation is a 4-day residential course for mid-career leaders in museums sector which has trained 130 people from 8 different countries since 2004. The programme stresses the development of strong personal skills and convictions - realistic self-assessment, negotiating opportunities and securing appropriate mentors.

### [Tandem, Turkey/EU](#)

Tandem is an initiative of the [European Cultural Foundation](#) (Amsterdam), [Mitost](#) (Berlin) and [Anadolu Kultur](#) (Istanbul) supported by [Stiftung Mercator](#) (Essen). It comprises of a two-year cultural exchange programme, now in its second year, which establishes partnerships between cultural organisations in Turkey and cultural organisations in EU countries. The programme brings cultural managers from Turkey and the EU together to realise a shared-project, linked to their cultural expertise. Each participant takes a placement at their partner's organisation, to plan and implement the project.