

Creating Cultural Leadership: South West

A pilot programme commissioned by Culture South West

Delivered by Leadership South West, based at the Centre for Leadership Studies, University of Exeter in partnership with Dartington Creative Enterprise, Dartington College of Arts

Evaluation Report

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June 2006*

“It surprised me that many people had similar issues to me - particularly around confidence, and the ‘imposter syndrome’. I suppose I didn’t expect initially that so much of the development would be about coming to understand myself - and observe and question my behaviour and others - rather than learning the ‘rules’ of leadership.”



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Executive summary

Creating Cultural Leadership: South West was a pilot cultural leadership development programme commissioned by Culture South West, the regional cultural consortium, and delivered by Leadership South West based at the Centre for Leadership Studies, University of Exeter in partnership with Dartington Creative Enterprise (formerly the Centre for Creative Enterprise & Participation) at Dartington College of Arts.

The aim of the programme was to support cross sectoral collaboration for cultural leadership capacity building and in particular:

- to support and inspire individuals occupying key positions across the cultural sector in the region
- to take the individual on a journey to equip themselves and their organisations with the necessary skills and confidence to work effectively in an ever more complex environment

The 26 programme participants came from across the six cultural sector domains of arts, heritage, media, museums, libraries and archives, sports and tourism and were predominantly emerging and mid-career leaders. Following a substantial development period, the programme was launched in October 2004 and ran from April 2005 to May 2006. It comprised workshops for the whole group (some residential) at Dillington House in Somerset, action learning groups and individual coaching. The majority of the funding came via allocations from the two Higher Education Institution's Higher Education Innovation Fund 2 grants, and the programme was also supported by each of the sponsoring cultural agencies, leaving a small fee required from participants or their employing organisations.

The evaluation of the programme has focused on the three areas of programme development, design and delivery; management and administration; and participant outcomes and impacts. The experiences and views of programme commissioners, managers, coaches, workshop presenters, participants and their employers or workplace colleagues have all contributed to the evaluation.

Programme features and impacts

The programme's key characteristics and strengths were:

- a participant profile drawn from across the cultural sector, enabling significant peer learning, enhancing understanding of other cultural domains, developing collaborative working and building potential to harness the transferability of skills and knowledge
- a focus on emerging and mid-career leaders from a range of organisations, large and small, from the public, private and not-for-profit sectors
- an approach to developing the leader from within, building on awareness and development of self and others within an appreciation of the wider context of cultural work, rather than concentrating on functional topics
- supporting skills development as an integral part of individual and group learning, in a safe and trusted environment
- a significant building of the confidence of participants as leaders, working within a continuing learning network and community of practice

This resulted in a very positive impact on participants' contributions to their organisations and constituencies, measured in terms of recognition of their development through promotions and new, more senior appointments; the number of new projects and collaborations, funds raised and jobs created; and the value of team and organisational development initiatives undertaken.

Summary of programme learning points and recommendations

The existing programme design is a robust concept, and provides a strong foundation for two options for the future, in part dependent on resources available:

- a further development and refinement of broadly the same format
- a reshaping to focus primarily on the action learning groups and coaching elements, with the workshop element offering a smaller, focused stimulus

In either case, there should be opportunities for connecting cohorts of participants to continue to build a peer learning network.

The following summarises the main learning points and recommendations from the evaluation, for consideration when designing and delivering future provision, whichever option is chosen.

Programme framing, articulation and documentation

- expressed aims and less overt intentions have been tested and proved; they can now be wholly and clearly articulated and communicated, with a detailed and adaptable learning support pack developed from the existing imaginative learning log

Delivery agent

- a higher education delivery agent provides useful validation of a programme and offers important opportunities to link in with current research in the field; and the role of the Programme Director should be fully realised as the provider of the “through line” of the programme, facilitating quality provision and engagement

Participant recruitment, selection and preparation

- post this pilot, future recruitment should be open access, within a domain quota framework, with clear selection criteria and an application process based on best equal opportunities practice; appropriate preparation at the programme start will enable participants to engage in supported, self-managed learning as effectively as possible

Workshops

- future workshops can be developed from best practice achieved in the pilot; appropriate structuring and timing overall, with individual sessions having clear and complementary aims and learning objectives, taking into account the range of learning styles and appropriately challenging content and pitch, with space for participant discussion and reflection, will be the determinants of providing the best stimulus to thinking

Action learning groups and coaching

- these models of learning, with a mix of cultural domains and types of organisation represented in the groups, should be maintained, with a continued selection of high quality coaches, who should have access to professional supervision

Employer and sector engagement

- employer agreements to provide opportunities for mutual feedback will support participants to put learning into practice in the immediate and wider workplace; and sponsoring agency commitments to develop experiences such as work shadowing will provide valuable further cultural sector context and leadership capacity building

Support for next steps

- follow on buddying, peer observation and workplace visits should be encouraged, and support provided such as a web based regional cultural leadership resource bank and coaching training for “graduating” participants who want to work with newer cohorts.

1. Introduction

Creating Cultural Leadership: South West was a pilot cultural leadership development programme commissioned by Culture South West, the regional cultural consortium, and delivered by Leadership South West based at the Centre for Leadership Studies, University of Exeter in partnership with Dartington Creative Enterprise (formerly the Centre for Creative Enterprise & Participation) at Dartington College of Arts. The 26 participants came from across the six cultural sector domains of arts, heritage, media, museums, libraries and archives, sports and tourism and were predominantly emerging and mid-career leaders. The programme was funded via allocations from the two Higher Education Institution’s Higher Education Innovation Fund 2¹ grants, each of the sponsoring cultural agencies² and fees from the participants or their employing organisations. Developed over an eighteen month period from the beginning of 2003, the programme was launched in October 2004, ran from April 2005 to May 2006 and comprised whole group workshops (some residential), smaller action learning groups and individual coaching.

2. Evaluation purpose, methodologies and response rates

The evaluation was commissioned by the University of Exeter towards the end of the programme and the areas of focus agreed with the South West Cultural Sector Workforce Development Group, convened by Culture South West, as:

- Programme development, design and delivery
- Programme management and administration
- Participant outcomes and impacts

The commission was for six days work, so the evaluation was designed quite tightly as a summative tool to assess the particular qualities, strengths and weaknesses of the programme and make recommendations for any future provision. The emphasis has been on what has been achieved through the programme overall (“the bigger picture”) rather than on a detailed examination of individual learning journeys, whilst recognising the significant “distance travelled” by participants.

The evaluation methodologies comprised a review of programme documents, and questionnaires and interviews (telephone and face-to-face) undertaken with programme commissioners, managers, coaches, workshop presenters, participants and their employers or workplace colleagues. In addition, one workshop session was observed.

Questions used were mainly open ended, allowing for discursive responses. The evaluation has sought to draw out issues and trends from these responses, summarising and analysing as appropriate. Direct quotations are used where representative of several people’s views or when providing evidence of a particular significant experience from which learning about the

¹ The Higher Education Innovation Fund 2 (HEIF 2) was one of the Higher Education Funding Council for England’s competitive grant schemes (2004-06) to support higher education’s role in regional economic and social development, funded by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)

² Arts Council of England, South West, Heritage Lottery Fund, Sport England South West, Museums Libraries and Archives South West, South West Screen and Tourism Skills Network

programme can be drawn, and, where appropriate, used to inform future provision. All responses were considered in confidence and individual sources have been kept anonymous, as far as practical, in the report.

There was a very high response rate from consultees. All participants contributed to the evaluation process: 24 completed the questionnaire; one participant contributed a summary written feedback and one was interviewed over the telephone using the questionnaire.

Twelve participants gave details of a work colleague (or in one case, two colleagues) who could be contacted about programme participation impact in the workplace and feedback on the progress of eleven participants was gained from questionnaire responses, one via a telephone conversation.

The initial programme commissioner, University of Exeter Programme Manager and Programme Director were interviewed face-to-face; the most recent Dartington College of Arts staff contact contributed written comments; two coaches completed questionnaires and took part in follow-up interviews (one face-to-face, one telephone) and one discussed responses to the questionnaire in a telephone interview.

Eight of the 11 workshop presenters completed questionnaires, and two others were interviewed over the telephone.

It should be noted that prior to the commission, the evaluator had some previous involvement in the programme during the design implementation phase when employed at Dartington College of Arts and later, as a freelance, co-presented one workshop session. One of the coaches was appointed Joint Chief Executive of Culture South West in the autumn of 2005.

3. Programme development

3.1 Research and consultation

The programme was developed over a significant period of time. In 2002, Culture South West (CSW) commissioned Bostock Marketing Group Limited³ to undertake a research and development study into cultural sector skills in the region. CSW's Education and Training Group then commissioned action research in April 2003 to establish the training and development needs of cultural sector managers in particular respect of leadership, change and project management. Ruth Cook Action Learning Associates Ltd consulted with second tier managers, SME chief executives, cultural entrepreneurs and development workers on sector trends and challenges, development needs and potential design factors for a development programme. The individual development needs responses were grouped by type, with 'Networking and Knowledge of "The System"' having the highest response rate, closely followed by 'Management of Staff and Organisations', 'Advocacy and Communications' and 'Individual

³ Bostock, Jonathan *Cultural Sector Skills in the South West* (Exeter: Culture South West, 2002)

Development/Survival'⁴. More functional topics such as 'Finance and Resource Management', 'Project Management', 'Fundraising' and so on, had much smaller response rates.

Following Ruth Cook's report and recommendations, the renamed South West Cultural Sector Workforce Skills Group (SWCSWSG) then drew up an invitation to tender in August 2003 for *Making It Real – a Cultural Sector Leadership Development Initiative for the South West* to: map existing leadership development provision of a sector-specific and generic kind, regionally and nationally; research and work up a fully costed Leadership Development initiative, taking on board the Ruth Cook report and other research; identify sources of funding; and to submit bids on behalf of the group. Leadership South West, based at the Centre for Leadership Studies, University of Exeter, was appointed to undertake the work in partnership with the then Centre for Creative Enterprise & Participation (now Dartington Creative Enterprise) at Dartington College of Arts. The consultants made use of a (paid) group of four cultural sector advisors and the developing programme was also sent out to the 35 people who had participated in the Ruth Cook action research, for their feedback and comment.

This process represents a considerably well researched and consultative approach, matching the content of the programme and the delivery mechanisms with identified needs and preferences amongst the target participant group. As a reiterative process, it built a strong, shared foundation for the potentially disparate cultural domain interests. In the latter stages, there was also an interesting partnership between two higher education institutions: one a large university, with a Centre of Excellence in leadership, the other a small, specialist arts college providing the knowledge and understanding of the cultural sector context.

3.2 Recruitment

As a pilot programme, the six cultural agencies were able to nominate five people from their domain to attend the programme. The group drew up a set of criteria for selecting nominees, who were to:

- have potential and drive to take the investment of participation in the programme forwards for the benefit of their organisation and the sector as a whole
- be based in the region, supportive of it and its benefits and likely to stay for a while
- hold a senior management role with at least two years managerial experience
- demonstrate commitment to the cultural sector, have potential to make an impact on the sector and be willing to play a broader role in, and give back to, the sector
- be committed to continuing personal and professional development
- have the time and funds to commit to the programme

The nomination process hit some difficulties as there were some inconsistencies of approach. In the best cases, the agreed process was followed and potential nominees were contacted by the relevant cultural agency, and the programme and nomination explained and discussed. The University of Exeter then invited the nominee to the launch. This approach had been agreed in order to maintain cultural domain autonomy, but in some cases there was a capacity issue in following through the process. Additionally, in the case of the heritage sector, the Heritage Lottery Fund was represented on the SWCSWSG and provided the financial contribution, but English Heritage made the nominations. Where the nomination process was delegated to staff distant from the programme, the sense of connection with, and ownership of, the programme was lost. In some cases, potential nominees were confused to receive the standard invitation to the launch letter with no prior contact from the relevant cultural agency, which had just passed names on to the University of Exeter. Lack of direct contact meant that some participants were

⁴ Cook, Ruth *The Development Needs of Cultural Sector Managers in the South West* (Exeter: Culture South West, 2003)

unsure why they had been nominated, with the danger that they felt they had been nominated because they “needed” it, rather than that they were positively being chosen in respect of the criteria. This range of problems resulted in not all 30 places being taken up on the programme. A centralised approach from the University of Exeter would have standardised the procedure and enabled participants to understand in a consistent way why they had been nominated. However, this process was chosen specifically because of the pilot nature of the programme and there would be no intention to repeat this in any future programme. The launch and first workshop provided opportunities for the participants to be reassured about the reasons for their nomination.

The majority of participants who attended the programme launch thought it helped them understand the programme, and the commitment it required, better. For some it answered specific queries, for others it served to confirm a decision to attend already made. One participant detected some lack of clarity and two were unsure about the other potential participants: this latter concern was dispelled when actually on the course. Others specifically mentioned it was useful to meet the other potential participants, and some of those who did not attend the launch felt initially at a disadvantage at the first workshop in terms of not having met some of the other participants, although the Programme Director had talked directly to these participants on an individual basis.

4. Participant profile

4.1 Demographics

Twenty seven participants started on the programme and one withdrew. The names and positions of participants, and their employing organisations are given in Appendix I. Each “county” in the region was represented. There were 20 women and six men. Of the participants who completed the voluntary equal opportunities monitoring, two have a disability and all are of white UK European origin.

The cultural sector domain background of participants was distributed as follows:

Domain	Number of participants
Arts	4
Heritage	3
Media	5
Museums, libraries and archives	5
Sport	5
Tourism	4
<i>total</i>	26

The number of years participants had been working in the cultural sector ranged from 18 months to 25 years, with an average of 15 years. Three participants described themselves as “emerging/early career” leaders, 18 as “mid-career” and two as “well established”. The number of years in a leadership position, as self-defined by the participants, ranged from 18 months to 25 years, with an average of just over seven years. Setting aside the two “well established” leaders holding self-defined leadership positions for 24 and 25 years respectively, the average number of years in a leadership position was just over five and a half years.

Based on a sample of 16 of the participants, the number of people managed directly by participants ranged from none to 18 with an average of five; the largest number of employees below the direct lines was 80. The number of management layers above participants ranged from none to four with an average of two. Three of the sample participants were Executive

Directors of small organisations, reporting to a board of trustees. Those working in local authorities or quangos mostly had two management layers above and then the Chief Executive. Six participants managed freelance workers and consultants rather than, or in addition to, employees, and one was responsible for 400 volunteers through their supervising staff.

The target group of emerging and mid-career leaders was therefore broadly achieved, and the range of organisational and work contexts commonly found across the cultural sector represented: including small independent commercial companies, not-for-profit organisations, large local authorities, county based development organisations, regional based agencies - and working patterns comprising part-time employees, freelance project workers, consultants and volunteers as well as full-time employees.

4.2 Development needs

Participants drew up Personal Development Plans (PDPs) with the support of their coaches, and whilst these remained confidential, coaches reported the topics to the Programme Director. Whilst some of these represented specific skills development needs, the majority of topics were concerned with large, underlying organisational challenges requiring both personal professional development and enhanced people management understanding and approaches. The Programme Director's compiled list of participants' development needs can be grouped as below:

Personal/people management	Strategic	Functional
Developing confidence (how do I know I'm being effective/ recognising personal achievements and getting positive affirmation/the importance of incremental gains)	Balance between strategic, developmental and operational roles	Effective decision making
Line management and delegation	Moving from operational to strategic thinking	Improve personal organisation
Managing difference, conflict and criticism	Strategic planning	Chairing and presentation skills
Recognising and articulating leadership strengths and styles		Marketing and dealing with the media
How to model and cascade good leadership through an organisation		Managing effective communication
Managing boundaries (e.g. role, time, work/home)		Financial management skills
Managing and influencing upwards		Project management
Advocacy		Negotiating
Managing change		
Leading an expanded organisation		
Finding models of leadership that translate vision into action		
Combatting professional isolation		
Building professional relationships		
Need for reflection and thinking time		
Communicating enthusiasm for change/effective advocacy		
Difficult personnel issues		
Managing expectations/		

assumptions of self and others		
Thinking outside the box		
Personal responsibility and when to 'let go' of things beyond our control		
Professional isolation		
Defining and understanding roles - especially during a period of change and restructure		
How to advance and develop as a leader whilst being 'blocked' from above		

This list mirrored the initial findings of the Ruth Cook report (see page 6) and confirmed the appropriateness of the overall aim and design of the programme. As well as proving substantive starting points for the coaches' work with participants as individuals and in the action learning groups, this was also informative material for the ongoing refinement and briefings associated with delivering the workshop programme. The PDPs were used variously, and consideration could be given in the future to taking a more structured approach to reviewing them at particular points along the programme.

4.4 Attendance

Participant attendance was overall very good, although one workshop session was affected by snow, and three participants were on periods of maternity leave during the programme. Other reasons given by participants for other than 100% attendance were:

Reason	Number of responses
Urgent/essential responsibilities within organisation	5
Conflict with existing commitment	3
Day to day workload/time pressure	3
Illness	3
Personal	2
Child care difficulties	1

It is notable no one gave dissatisfaction as a reason for non-attendance. One participant moved jobs during the programme to work outside the UK but still managed 100% attendance, despite travel arrangements adding at least a day to each contact session. For a pilot programme that ran over a year, the retention rate was excellent and participants demonstrated a good - and in some cases very high - level of commitment to attendance.

5. Programme design and delivery

5.1 Overall design

The programme comprised workshops for the whole group (some residential), action learning groups and individual coaching. It was based on providing a learning journey for participants through identifying the context and meaning of leadership, looking at self, others, the workplace, environment and the future, and the programme began with coaches developing a Personal Development Plan with their assigned delegates, prior to the first workshop. See Appendix II for the programme outline.

5.2 Aims and expectations

The underlying aim as described by the programme commissioner and Exeter Programme Manager, but not formally documented in final programme materials, was to support cross sectoral collaboration for cultural leadership capacity building. It was a key intention to develop leadership capacity rather than just focus on developing individual leaders.

The aims specifically documented in the programme description given to participants were:

- to support and inspire individuals occupying key positions across the cultural sector in the region
- to take the individual on a journey to equip themselves and their organisations with the necessary skills and confidence to work effectively in an ever more complex environment

Participants all had their own descriptions of the programme aims, which reflected the same understanding of developing leadership in a shared, cross cultural context. Most felt these aims had been met, whilst recognising that the real impact could only be judged on a longer term basis.

In terms of participants' personal expectations, the main foci were in the areas of understanding more about leadership, being a leader oneself, and learning from, and getting to know, people from the other cultural sectors. In terms of meeting expectations, over half of participants felt that these had been met in full or exceeded.

Expectations met	Number of responses
Exceeded	9 (40%)
In full	4 (17%)
Mostly	7 (30%)
Partly	3 (13%)
Not at all	0
<i>total</i>	23

Participants' experiences that are *unexpected* often give an interesting picture of the success of a programme, and in this case these experiences were predominantly positive:

"I was surprised and pleased to discover that there does seem to be a different approach to leadership in our sector. This approach translated into a really positive discussion and learning environment."

"How important the coaching was and also the learning groups - these are models for development that I would be keen to find a way to continue and introduce for others in my team."

"I had no idea of what working with a coach would be like on a one-to-one basis, with someone who is totally independent from your workplace and network. Being able to be totally open with someone about your fear, failings, vulnerabilities, weaknesses - as well as getting a better handle on what drives you, motivates you, gets you up in the morning - was a brilliant and hugely valuable experience."

"How it was much more of a personal journey and hence only mostly met my expectations (not a criticism). However looking at where my organisation is now and recognising the part I had to play in that, I can see the impact is greater than at first glance!"

“Was not really sure what to expect - I thought I was doing a good job and I didn’t realise there was still a huge leap I could make to developing my work and life skills ... (unexpected was) ... opening up the possibilities of my development as a person and a leader that I am still capable of.”

“I was not stretched or stimulated as much as I might have been.”

“Realising ... the fundamental similarities between all of our jobs.”

“How many common problems the people participating have and how many similarities ostensibly separate sectors actually have.”

“That working with people from different sectors of the cultural sector could be so rewarding.”

“I was worried after the first session that I may not fit into the course as I was not from a council or strategic organisation, however I found my confidence growing as the course went on and I felt that I did have more to offer than I imagined.”

“New support and friends have been found. Also connections and partnerships for work.”

5.3 Highlights and most significant learning points

Participants’ programme highlights and most significant learning points were concerned with significant self recognition and development as leaders, and the value of peer learning across the cultural sector. The following experiences of six participants typify the responses given:

“Recognising that I am and can be a leader... learning about motivations for why people work. It’s about the individual as well as the organisation.”

“Understanding my own leadership style and the way I do what I do.”

“... that leadership starts from within, from your own personal and professional well-being and self-knowledge. This means that time spent directly on yourself is directly beneficial to your team, your work...”

“Recognising that there is a difference between my assumptions, others’ assumptions and the truth. That people see me as a leader and more importantly I recognise myself as one. Confirming that leadership isn’t about job titles or status.”

“Turning confidence into strong self belief that it is possible to be a leader in the South West and that it may be possible to transfer leadership skills across sectors.”

“The last two days when everything came together, the speakers were inspirational, the learning from each other really significant, the coach’s contribution will be lasting, and the future seemed much more manageable and positive because I know there are others out there working wrestling with similar challenges and that together we are working towards a more ‘joined up’ and influential cultural sector.”

The coaches’ feedback on highlights focused on the learning groups, the cumulative cross sectoral learning that took participants out of isolation, the focus on developing an awareness of self within a wider context - and the salsa dancing together on the last night:

“Somehow it embodied a real gelling of a group of very different people, in sheer celebration of what they had experienced and learned together.”

5.4 Cultural sector sensitivity and specificity

The majority of participants commented that they found the programme related specifically to the cultural sector, although some expected this to be in a more substantial way. The primary specificity was achieved through the participant profile: this, and the consequent sharing of knowledge and experience, was highly valued.

“It was fantastic to be with such a broad range of different but related sectors. It was the best thing about the course.”

Participants reported that it gave them a wider appreciation of the cultural sector as a whole, and one in particular commented:

“I have been inspired to take lobbying about the cultural sector more seriously, across all the domains.”

There was a clear (and sometimes surprised) identification that many issues are shared across the domains. One learning group looked specifically at transferable skills, finding that there were significant skills that could be applied to the range of cultural domains. Whilst some other participants felt that this issue of transferability of skills - and knowledge - across the cultural sector was only just being touched on towards the end of the programme, the experience of attending did encourage some to start to think about taking a more strategic post in the future, and many were looking to work more collaboratively across the domains, proactively “thinking other domains” when developing projects and programmes. Having an expanded cross-sectoral networked resource of contacts was prized, alongside more informed working relationships, an appreciation of others’ perspectives and a clearer identification with the whole cultural sector, not just a single domain (the silo approach), drawn from a broader knowledge base. Many expressed hopes for a more integrated cultural sector in the future, albeit recognising the challenges of attitudes, time and funding. Several participants mentioned that spending more time in each other’s workplaces would enhance cross cultural sector understanding and partnership working.

Coaches made the following comments about the cross cultural participant profile:

“... a greater understanding that similar issues pertain across domains which led to a lack of competitive neurosis! Much more empathy and consideration for people from different parts of the sector. Good skills exchange. Great potential for collaboration across domains. Exciting ideas generated. Myths exploded. Assumptions clarified/put away.”

“... it enriched it [the programme], because they got to meet some different people who tended to hold very similar values, and experience similar challenges.”

They were not, however, unanimous about the impact on transferability of knowledge and skills. Two expressed particular opinions on the issue. One had focused on these issues in the learning group including some practical work on CVs, could envisage successful transferability and observed that participants were gaining a flexibility of approach. Another coach felt that there was still a greater understanding and knowledge of another sector to be gained before being able to work in it, that skills covered in the programme had been general interpersonal ones, rather than sector specific and that perhaps people didn’t necessarily want to move out of their domain. However, this coach also suggested that the issue could have been addressed with more direction through the workshop element.

Apart from the deliberately chosen cross sectoral make up of the participants, other cultural sector specific indicators noted by participants were: the cultural sector background of the coaches and some workshop presenters; cultural sector content, references and examples; interest in creative approaches; commitment to development for the public good; and discussions around the importance of creating cultural value.

The workshop presenters from a leadership or personal/organisational development background outside the cultural sector were mindful of the cultural sector context and sensitive to providing examples appropriate to this single sector cohort; they were also clear that their core material remained unchanged - cultural sector people and leadership issues were the same as in other sectors. The presenters from the cultural sector focused more specifically on cultural sector contextual information, content and related participatory activities. Presenters who provided the most stimulating sessions were able to maximise cross sector learning amongst participants and empower them to 'translate' generic issues to their own situation, due to good facilitation skills rather than a specific background.

5.5 Design elements

The three elements of workshop, action learning group and coaching were not designed to be of equal value, but certainly interconnected. The workshops were designed to act as catalysts to changing mindsets, with the coaching providing individually based follow-up supported reflection and action planning, and the action learning groups providing a shared context for problem solving. The latter also represented a significant networking opportunity and potential to achieve leadership capacity building for the sector. One presenter in particular noted that knowing the groups and coaching were in place made it possible to consider workshop topics more deeply in the confidence that implementation issues would be picked up elsewhere.

Seven participants felt the elements were of equal value to them, and the collated ratings from the others for each element were as follows:

Element	First (most significant)	Second (next significant)	Third (least significant)
Workshop		2	16
Action learning group	7	10	1
Coaching	12	5	1

Five participants commented specifically on the interconnectedness of the action learning groups and coaching, and two commented on the interrelationship of different functions between the three elements. Whilst the workshops were recognised as a useful trigger, their mixed success (see below) no doubt affected how much value the majority of participants placed on them.

5.6 Workshops

The six workshops were held at Dilmington House, Somerset, and were one, one and a half or two days long. Whilst everyone greatly appreciated the environment, being well looked after and the opportunity to network and come together as a larger group, the actual sessions represented the least consistently successful element of the programme. They were intended to be challenging "thinking posts", leaving people wanting to know more, and while some achieved this and acted as inspirational high points for participants, they did not all meet this aim. The first and last workshops were noted by the majority of participants, and also coaches, as particularly successful, which made for an effective start to the programme and a positive conclusion. Most other sessions held some resonance or provoked new thinking for at least some participants, even if the workshop as a whole was seen as less beneficial by the majority of participants.

The critical success factors for workshops were, not unsurprisingly: relevant, stimulating material delivered in a variety of engaging ways by presenters who were passionate about their subject matter; clear learning outcomes; responsiveness to participants; and space to think and discuss. Some sessions which were more about imparting information or policy could have usefully been reframed into a different format. Problems arose in workshops when participants felt that presenters were not aware, or respectful, of different learning styles, and there was not enough contextualisation of their sessions or clear potential links back into the workplace. When a real difficulty or disagreement arose, unfortunately this was not always used to develop constructive debate, but rather put to one side.

There were also some issues with timing of different sorts. One-day workshops could feel rushed; participants noted some input overload; and the timing (placing) of sessions within the programme was sometimes felt to be inappropriate e.g. some participants felt that personally challenging activities would feel less threatening later on in the programme, when people were more comfortable with each other, and the session on personality types perhaps came too late.

These problems are not surprising for a pilot programme and with the awareness of the delivery agent of what aspects need improvement, it should be possible to bring all workshops up to the quality experience of the best, with consistent attention to quality assurance issues of appropriate presenter selection and preparation, and some restructuring from the learning the pilot offers.

5.7 Action learning groups

The membership of groups was planned initially on a geographical basis for travel sense, with the intention of achieving a good mix of represented domains and of people from large and small organisations, although this was not always possible. One group was affected in terms of numbers by three maternity leaves, and a problem arose in one group where a participant came from an organisation funded by the agency of another participant, raising issues of confidentiality, trust and boundaries. There were some difficulties in arranging dates that everyone could make and some participants sensed that others were not making attendance a priority. Groups took place in different venues, including the participants' workplaces, which people found interesting and useful.

Each coach ran their action learning group in different ways, but with the same aim to facilitate participants supporting each other in dealing with issues and problems in their work, giving them specific models and techniques to test out new approaches to problem solving in a safe, supportive environment. These included hotseating, triads (working in threes as presenter, enabler and observer), working on a learning focus and appreciative enquiry.

Participants found the learning groups very valuable indeed and the following typifies what many experienced:

“...it was very helpful to be able to share problems/concerns in a very supportive framework and with the enhanced confidence that developed within the group over the year. It was good to be able to discuss in some detail specific leadership challenges and seek advice from colleagues.”

The chart below summarises the types of benefits participants reported they derived from the action learning groups:

Type of benefit	Number of responses
------------------------	----------------------------

Getting to know and learning with, and from, people across the sector and understanding their organisations/contexts	8
Giving & receiving support, encouragement, constructive feedback	7
Friendships, humour, social	6
Space to discuss issues in depth and find solutions away from work	4
Appreciating openness, trust, honesty and confidentiality	4
Building a network with peers	3
Sharing insecurities/problems/concerns/work issues in a safe/supportive/non-judgemental environment with no professional repercussions	3
Finding others share similar problems	3
Recognising self as a leader, understanding leadership style	3
Learning real skills & practising techniques e.g. listening, problem solving	2
Increasing self confidence, better working relationships outside	2

Some participants felt they might have “missed out” on experiences because the groups ran differently, but such groups will always to a certain extent be individual coach dependent, and this was not seen as a significant issue overall.

5.8 Coaching

There was a call during the last session of the programme of “Coaches for ever!”. This was also a highly successful and valued element of the programme. The coaches were selected for their significant skills and expertise and were seen as impartial professional people to whom participants could talk about the issues in their workplace and life, without any agenda other than they were being of assistance. Benefits expressed by participants included:

- a chance to have a rant about the organisation to someone outside it
- looking at specific issues and concerns objectively
- time to think, reflect, consider issues and work out solutions, with new insights
- gaining in confidence about what you are doing at work, and recognising abilities that you have, but have not appreciated
- discovering a whole new way of being and learning to tap into
- improved capacity to look inward, act more effectively, make more effective decisions
- listening to colleagues with much expertise and knowledge
- support, affirmation, ideas
- valuing the step by step focus

“The coaching has been fantastic! I have felt really supported by it...and at the same time encouraged (through questioning and gentle challenging) to re-examine assumptions I have made about myself and my work place...and doing so has enabled me to recognise and open up new possibilities for myself...and given me more confidence in myself and increased my capacity to make changes for myself”.

“This was the most valuable part of the course for me as it was personal. In brief I gained in confidence with my abilities as a leader, I feel more willing to look at myself as the person who leads my organisation, I feel that I listen to my colleagues more and that I listen more in meetings and I am generally more considered in my approach to projects and opportunities. Having an investment in me time was hugely important to me and I feel made me a much better boss overall and probably a better person at coping with the stress of running the organisation.”

“At the end of it, I knew much more about myself, my strengths and the things that I would benefit from working a bit harder at. I explored different/new ways of working, attitudes, values and coping skills. Learning the value of reflection, listening and looking after yourself.”

Participants’ one consistent recommendation for the future was for more coaching:

“Please can we look at how we can promote and implement this as a core need for the development of the cultural sector. It should be seen as a long term arrangement and support for people to ensure they are empowered to articulate and promote ongoing creativity, culture and innovation in themselves, their organisations and the sector.”

Coaches appreciated the time available in the programme for developing the coaching relationship (and in fact, often gave additional time) and learnt from each other as well as helping participants learn. Their observations of change in participants focused around a growing confidence, and what one coach called “a better awareness of working consciously with relationships with others, rather than just tasks”. The issue of coach supervision is raised in the next section.

6. Management and administration

Management and administration of the programme were based at the University of Exeter, as Leadership South West was readily able to provide supported office space for the Administrator and Programme Director and Dartington College of Arts was not. This, coupled with structural staffing changes at Dartington which meant that the earlier sharing of development and management responsibilities could not be sustained, resulted in delivery ownership and recognition being firmly with the University of Exeter by the time the first workshop was run.

The freelance Programme Director recruitment process was undertaken by the two HEIs, via an invitation to tender process. Culture South West was also represented on the interviewing panel. The Programme Director started work in October 2004. The original Administrator from Leadership South West left shortly after the launch, and another member of staff was allocated time in her workload to support the programme.

The following chart shows ratings given to the management and administration of the programme:

Rating	Participants	Presenters	Coaches
Excellent	16 (64%)	4 (40%)	1 (34%)
Good	9 (36%)	3 (30%)	2 (66%)
Adequate		2 (20%)	
Poor		1 (10%)	
<i>total</i>	25	10	3

Participants were provided with a simple introductory pack with information on contact details, workshop arrangements and the outline workshop programme (which subsequently changed in terms of actual session topics and presenters) prior to starting the programme, and with a very attractively designed learning log at the first workshop. Entitled “workplayinspire”, this gave pen pictures of the Programme Director, coaches and presenters with their favourite leadership quotations, most inspirational read and thoughts on the meaning of leadership and culture, and headed pages for making notes. This journal was used in different ways by participants, and for several represented a special place for recording their learning journeys. Information on each forthcoming workshop was sent by email, using a standard table format outlining the sessions, with other material as provided by the presenters, of varying types.

For participants, the main strength of the management and administration of the programme was the programme staff, who were seen to be professional, efficient, caring, supportive, friendly and helpful. They displayed sensitivity and humour, and were easily contactable and responsive. Communications were clear and concise. Weaknesses and areas for development identified by some included the need for more detailed information about the workshop presenters and their sessions, a more focused structure for the workshops which gave better space for review and feedback and more insightful and challenging summaries. Some were unclear about the Programme Director's role.

The Administrator attended all the workshops, which helped greatly in making the role part of the programme, and enabling the post holder to get to know everyone involved, ensuring effective liaison on administrative matters. It also meant there was someone dedicated and able to deal with any administrative problems that arose during a workshop (e.g. extra breakout rooms needed, changing timings of coffee breaks and so on) and that notes produced during sessions could be typed up with understanding. The main problem from the administrative and management perspective was that participants did not always notify that they would be missing a workshop in time to avoid the cancellation charge, which was full rate if under 14 days. There were therefore unnecessary costs for the programme. Throughout, the venue staff were found to be very helpful.

The coaches appreciated their first briefing session and their request for further meetings with the Programme Director was met. Whilst there was no formal agenda for these meetings, they proved useful for coaches to share issues and learning with each other. Supervision of coaches was part of the Programme Director's brief in terms of quality assurance issues only and the need for professional supervision for coaches relating to dealing with, for example, personal disclosures had not been predicted. However, the Exeter Programme Manager responded readily to a request for discussion over a difficult situation, and also arranged for a session for all the coaches with a professional coach trainer, which was seen as very beneficial. The coaches felt that sometimes channels of communication were not always clear, which included some uncertainty about the role of the Programme Director, in which they expected a more proactive central directing of the programme. At times coaches felt that they carried an inappropriate management load, but they were also happy to respond positively to the request to help refine the design of the last workshop.

The experience of workshop presenters in terms of briefing, support and feedback was mixed. In most cases, presenters felt fully briefed and supported, but there were notable examples where others reported that they had not been sent full details of the programme, so were unaware of its context and aims, the learning outcomes for the particular workshop, the placing of their specific session within the workshop or the background of participants. One presenter had the focus of their workshop session changed without discussion, and then a submitted title was changed without notice. In one case, it was left to the different individual session presenters within a workshop to liaise with each other without any mediating guidance. Scheduling deadlines were not always clear or adhered to consistently, and some presenters noted that material reached participants too late, or without accurate or appropriate detail as requested. Several presenters noted that they did not receive the feedback that was collected at the end of the workshop. These management issues impacted on the quality of the workshop delivery, which has been discussed earlier.

The Programme Director's role had its challenges, as the appointment was necessarily made after the development period had been completed, and the appointee needed to understand the ethos of the programme and refine its content without having been part of the initial design phase. The brief included development of workshop themes, liaison with workshop presenters over content and supervision of coaches. However, from all perspectives, including that of the Programme Director, it was felt that the role was not fully realised in practice. There was

untapped potential to provide more leadership and informed cohesion as a connecting and facilitating “through line” in the programme, especially in relation to framing the workshops, and the learning opportunities they presented, to best effect.

In terms of ongoing monitoring during the programme, evaluation forms were used for the first two workshops, which asked each participant to choose from given sets of words to describe each presenter’s delivery style and content; suggest any improvements to administration; and describe key thoughts that they would take away with them. These forms were then replaced by gathering feedback and learning points via post-it notes as participants found the forms somewhat of a burden to complete. Participants also gave feedback by way of discussing issues raised in workshops within the learning groups. No specific feedback was asked for from workshop presenters at the time, but, as mentioned above, meetings became important sharing and feedback sessions for coaches. The Programme Director responded to participants’ particular concerns after the second workshop by letter, restating the aims of the workshop and offering a personal reflection exercise, although this was not felt by all to be an adequate response. General participant feedback was then also used more in briefings with workshop presenters. A particular, and useful, change of approach as a result of ongoing monitoring of the workshop programme was to ensure presenters gave explicit aims and learning objectives for their sessions.

7. Participant learning outcomes

The following chart groups responses from participants’ descriptions of what they gained from the programme in terms of knowledge, skills and attributes.

Learning outcome	Number of responses
Increased confidence	15
Better/broader knowledge of sector incl. commonalities	11
Developed leadership awareness/style/tools	10
Improved communication skills	7
Self awareness/self reflection/self challenge	7
Influencing/advocacy/negotiating skills	4
Using networks/contacts	4
Better understanding of skills and abilities	2
Renewed enthusiasm/purpose	2
Motivation awareness/skills	1

The observations from coaches are also useful in assessing outcomes, and all three in particular noted the increased self-confidence in all participants. Other key gains observed include:

- greater self awareness
- greater sense of self agency, of responsibility for self
- greater grip on their own learning, and responsibility for that
- better understanding of the processes of being in relationship with others as a leader, and as someone being led
- specific strategies and skills in handling e.g. confrontation, difference
- ability to spot assumptions being made, and to challenge them
- application of models of thinking and doing back into the workplace
- thinking strategically
- assertiveness

- working more visibly with their values
- seeing that being a leader is just about people, not about having a magic wand
- feeling more able and empowered to take decisions
- increased understanding of leadership and its various forms, ability to move between different modes when required
- improved listening and giving feedback, assisting management/team issues
- understanding of possible choices re work promotion/balance etc. leading to action
- increased ability to articulate issues
- commonly using reflection, as a term and a practice

8. Participant impacts

8.1 Economic

Evaluating and reporting on the economic impact of the programme was a requirement for the two HEIs because of the HEIF2 funding, and in Leadership South West's case, this was also of interest to their main funding body, the South West of England Regional Development Agency (SWRDA). Participants were made aware of this from the very beginning and encouraged to note specific achievements that impacted on their own financial position as cultural workers, on their organisation or the wider cultural sector. Whilst a monetary value is not currently available for every example given below, the list of individual participant achievements below provides an impressive summary of impacts which participants have noted as directly related to learning from the programme. (NB the list does not duplicate where there are new collaborative projects between two programme participants or their organisations).

Promotions/new posts/responsibilities:

- more responsible leadership role, influencing fellow officers and councillors
- increase of annual salary by £2,000
- new post with higher salary
- development of role from local to regional, including working with other programme participants
- promotion, with initial increase of salary by £2,000
- new post
- appointment to two new boards, assisting increase of investment in sector
- increase of annual salary by £6,000
- increase of annual salary by £4,000
- promotion, with increase of salary by £3,000
- gained place on approved list of UK/EU parliamentary candidates for a major political party
- became Acting President of a regional organisation, standing for election as President
- became a director of the board of a regional cultural development agency
- elected Chair of village's regeneration committee
- part-time secondment to cover maternity leave, increase of salary by £4,000
- adding consultancy to role

Fundraising/job creation/new projects:

- raised £50,000 for a project with two jobs created
- contributed to organisational review resulting in a further £59,000 from Arts Council England South West to deliver recommendations in the development plan
- established new collaborative projects with another programme participant, valued at £5,000

- established new collaborative project involving another programme participant plus another organisation
- established new collaborative project with two other organisations underpinned by better understanding gained from the programme
- developed coaching/CPD programme for creative practitioners and young people as equals with another organisation represented on the programme, based on the programme model
- set up event organised by young people and organisations as above, modelling next phase of work together, looking at a distributed leadership networked model of organisation
- developed project proposal for collaborative working with a budget in excess of £100,000
- put work colleague in touch with a programme participant leading to new project, valued at £5,000
- raised £20,000 for a project with one job created
- created three new local partnerships which will bid for funding; one received £18,000 to date
- increased organisation’s revenue annual grant from £52,000 to £81,500 (approx 60% increase)
- applied for additional funding with support of others in learning group, value £20 - 60,000
- planned collaborative projects
- established placement scheme, valued at £5,000, with trainee benefit valued at £10,000
- established collaborative project with programme participant, valued at £2,000
- submitted successful funding applications which, once complete, will mean over £6 million of inward investment and significant other long term regeneration potential⁵

People management:

- contributed to design of new staff appraisal procedure and team building leading to better team spirit, valued at £2,000
- increased effectiveness of team making an enhanced contribution to organisation’s priorities, valued at £25,000
- enhanced performance management understanding and skills, leading to successful support of team members and introduction of staff restructure, saving £30,000
- enhanced performance and team management, valued at £25,000
- relocated, restructured and restaffed partnership
- enabled team to be more motivated and capable of more work so clients able to access additional finance and increase turnover
- contributed significantly to organisational development project, valued at £10,000

Bearing in mind three important caveats, that no sophisticated metrics were used for assessing the value of the people management elements; the need to recognise that in some cases the programme was not the only critical success factor⁶; and not all funding applications have been assessed yet, the projected totals for each impact area, where values have been given, are:

Impact area	Value	Jobs created
Promotions/new posts/responsibilities	£21,000	

⁵ This figure is included as the participant attributes the development of self-confidence, team building approaches, advocacy, communication and presentation skills and a lessening of the “imposter syndrome” experienced due to the programme as a significant contributor to a successful outcome in a very demanding application process

⁶ For example, as noted in as footnote 5

Fundraising/job creation/new project	£6,323,500	3
People management	£92,000	
Projected total	£6,436,500	3

The breakdown of beneficiaries is as follows:

Beneficiary	Value
Programme participant	£21,000
Other individual cultural worker	£15,000 + 3 new jobs
Participant's organisation	£270,500
Collaboration of organisations/ cultural sector	£6,130,000

This represents a very significant impact, particularly given that this is a partial snapshot immediately following the programme, and further economic benefits are likely to accrue as learning is embedded and acted on over time.

8.2 Organisational

Participants were asked what support and feedback they received from their employing organisation and in what ways they had been able to share learning in the workplace. Of participants who responded to this question (for instance, it was difficult for those on maternity leave to comment in detail) five reported that (financial contribution and time off aside) they had received no support or feedback, and four commented that in general the workplace was not very aware of their attendance on the programme. This was a matter of some regret, as one participant explained:

“...this is the one big failure for me of the programme. I did manage a briefing session with the relevant Staff Development Officer at the beginning of the programme but that was it ...I think it's because there is no culture of celebrating success, leadership skills etc.”

Nine participants gave specific examples of useful interaction regarding the programme: for instance, discussion and feedback through line management meetings, a proactive use of techniques learned, and where there were no obvious direct ways of sharing learning, developing a changed conduct at work. One participant reported:

“I have been very well supported by my line manager, Head of Service and employer in that they have recognised the importance of my attending and have allowed me to ‘experiment’ back in the workplace. I have shared aspects of my learning with my team and also our wider service. In terms of dissemination and benefit to my employer, this will be more in the form of a ripple effect - my getting my own team working better and managing my own work which will encourage others to reflect on their own leadership.”

And another:

“I have changed line managers mid way through the programme and to date my new line manager only knows a little bit about what I have been doing. My previous line manger was very aware and discussed the programme regularly and he knew what my learning challenges were and gave me feedback about how he felt I was implementing any skill or idea. This was very helpful in that I had to be explicit about the programme to someone who was not involved which enabled me to internalise and re-evaluate exactly what I had been doing and getting from the programme.”

These comments are helpful in understanding how all participants could be supported better by their employers, and this issue is addressed in the recommendations.

All employers and workplace colleagues who responded to the evaluation questionnaire, bar one, commented on positive differences in participants as a result of attendance on the programme, that had already had an impact on the workplace (in its widest sense). Where the colleague was a line manager, there was evidence of helpful attention to the programme through line management and appraisal arrangements.

All noted that participants had gained in confidence, and other developments reported included:

- wider corporate view of role and remit
- improved understanding of cultural leadership role
- enhanced ability to undertake large scale project management
- ability to operate regionally
- ability to develop networks
- enhanced team management
- effective use of new techniques e.g. coaching, questioning, visioning
- cascading techniques to other managers
- enhanced contribution to senior management team
- development into roles beyond the post
- taking on work in new areas
- improved approaches to leading and managing meetings and briefing sessions
- robust and confident challenging of poor performance
- better use of evidence to inform decision making
- greater recognition of own learning styles and operating approaches, and an understanding that other people's are different and working with that
- thinking and acting more strategically, taking into account the "bigger picture", seeing partnerships and desired impacts
- increased openness to idea of change, and that change brings opportunity
- better listening to, and consideration of, other's points of view

The one line manager who reported no identifiable impacts on their organisation so far said:

"I would not have expected a rapid pay back from this kind of course, but I would expect to see some benefits to us as time goes on. Every member of my senior team is heavily loaded (and [the participant] is one of that team) and the sheer workload does not always permit new ideas to be tried out immediately."

The participant concerned had reported the lack of an appropriate forum for telling people about the programme and passing on learning, and this is an example of a structural factor that can affect realising the full potential of the programme back in the workplace.

9. Participant next steps

The afternoon of the last workshop focused on "Creating a way forward" and participants generated a list of desired paths and future outcomes, posing questions of how to:

- evaluate the effect of the programme on a long term basis
- demonstrate and communicate its value to employers and workplaces
- share learning more widely in workplaces and the sector as a whole

- develop relationships further within and outside the learning groups, utilising a regional network in the best ways
- maintain coaching relationships
- build a critical mass and leadership capacity
- avoid working in individual silos
- push the cultural agenda further, together
- ensure transferable skills are transferred
- provide feedback and support to future programme participants
- maintain the energy of the group, and of learning
- earn more money

Participants then discussed these further in fluid groupings around three starting points: “me”, “us” (the network) and “critical mass”. The following key points were made:

“Me”

Next steps focussed on addressing concerns about losing the support of the coaching and learning groups and maximising what has been learnt on the programme, and included the following suggested actions:

- adopt the structured learning focus approach that had been used and draw in others as appropriate to support individual learning
- “buddy” with someone, supported by circulated material on approaches and models
- develop an e-group
- use a journal
- work on becoming your own coach, keep challenging yourself and be more reflective
- work more in partnership with organisations in other cultural domains
- cite the programme and learning in your CV and job applications/interviews
- take advantage of the benefits of being a University of Exeter professional development programme alumni (newsletters, seminars, events etc.)

“Us” (the network)

There was a strong desire to continue to meet as a network of leaders, whether in existing learning groups, as the larger group or in new groupings, bearing in mind strategic discussion, skills development and the social element. The key issues and proposals were to:

- maintain “internal” value based reasons to network because of its benefits and use a buddy prompt system to provide some “external” justification
- develop peer observation in each others’ workplaces, again supported by circulated material on approaches and models
- meet as learning groups around events at each others’ organisations (e.g. project launches) and building this into CPD
- draw in new members through annual network symposia on “hot cultural issues”
- develop a database for the network where people’s skills and experiences can be described where offered as a mutual resource (and also covering spare rooms available for overnight stays - the cultural leadership B&B network!)
- explore ways of taking part in influencing regional cultural sector decision making processes as a network

“Critical Mass”

Participants discussed the importance of talking about the programme and its positive impacts as well as “living out” and developing the learning. Ideas to pursue included to:

- feed back in team meetings and with line managers
- apply learning in working practices and in the immediate workplace
- ensure employers understood the programme’s value and impacts
- make the case to employers that their investment in participation in the programme could be maximised through supporting further involvement in the network, embedded in work time
- establish a “culture re-united” website
- “spread the word” through meetings, newsletters, articles, other networks etc.
- promote oneself and other network members as cultural advocates and consultees alongside or instead of organisation’s CEOs
- act as lobbyists for the cultural sector as a whole, not just one’s own immediate domain
- invite key players to the evaluation day

Whilst the group usefully agreed on some practical actions, for example, in relation to setting up a database, the key outcome of the afternoon seemed to be participants’ realisation that the programme had provided them with a substantial starting point for further individual professional development and a new (or enhanced) realisation of the potential impact of thinking and working collectively across the cultural sector. Many expressed the wish to continue the learning groups and to find ways to facilitate and resource these.

Participant questionnaires, which were completed after this last workshop, also evidenced a tangible commitment to active next steps. The following table summarises individual next steps described.

Activity	Number of responses
Maintaining contact with learning group	16
Maintaining contact with programme participants	5
Revising working practices (people based)	5
Attending other learning opportunities	4
Making a CPD plan/making time for reflection/ using a journal	3
Buddying	3
Working on joint projects	2
Putting learning focus in practice	2
Creating a geographical based group	1
Putting general learning in practice	1
Developing CV	1
Using an external mentor	1
Exploring wider cultural sector for career development	1
Living by values and valuing self	1

All the learning groups met once more after the last workshop, and one in particular drew up a list of intentions, as follows:

- to commit to meet four times a year, for a day, for a one year period, and then review or commitment to further meetings
- to have a nominated chief facilitator for each event, to draw together a format or agenda on a collaborative basis
- to share hosting
- to share facilitation of the group process during our meetings
- to bring individual work issues to an action-learning style activity
- to bring individual models, ideas, and ways of working to share
- to review our experience of the process of, and learning from the meetings at the end of each one

- to invite our coach to social bits

Possible topics for the meetings were noted as:

- how can the cultural sector influence/work with Local Area Agreements
- our working environments
- developing an organisation/managing change
- looking at views from different hilltops
- developing ourselves as e.g. facilitators, coaches, leaders
- how to facilitate a diverse group towards a coherent vision
- how to facilitate constructive feedback
- how to bring people on side with an unpopular proposal

10. Learning points and recommendations

“The course has made me believe that I can do anything if I wanted.”

Creating Cultural Leadership: South West was a highly successful pilot programme with an impressive resultant positive impact on participants’ contributions to their organisations and constituencies. It also created a new networked resource of leaders keen to work increasingly in partnership and to advocate and build the regional cultural sector, beyond their individual domain. The learning from both the most and least effective elements of the programme needs to be fed into the planning of any future cultural leadership development provision in the region in the future.

The existing design is a robust concept, and provides a strong foundation for two options, in part dependent on resources available:

- further development and refinement of broadly the same format
- a reshaping to focus primarily on the action learning groups and coaching elements, with the workshop element offering a smaller, focused stimulus

In either case, there should be opportunities for connecting cohorts of participants to continue to build a peer learning network.

Given this, and without pre-empting the detail of any subsequent programmes, the following is a set of learning points and recommendations from the evaluation, for consideration when designing and delivering future provision, whichever option is chosen.

Programme framing, articulation and documentation

- Programme expressed aims and less overt intentions have been tested and proved; they can now be wholly and articulated in writing, and assertively communicated as a reference point during the programme, whilst respecting the need for responsiveness to participants’ particular expressed needs and interests
- These aims (and consequent programme content and delivery mechanisms) should include more specifically the transferability of skills and knowledge
- Documentation should include a stimulating learning log similar to that provided in the pilot, as part of a well presented and adequately detailed learning support pack, to which informative briefings for individual sessions and follow up resources can be added.

Delivery agent

- A higher education delivery agent (or agents) provides a useful validation of the standing and standard of a programme (even without accreditation as such) and offers important opportunities to link in with current research in the practice of leadership and cultural leadership in particular
- Such an agent also offers participants follow up support through other institutional provision
- Any partnership of delivery agents needs to underpin roles and responsibilities through a written agreement, to ensure continuance of input in the case of potential structural staffing changes
- The full potential of the role of the Programme Director should be realised as the provider of the “through line” of the programme, in particular with reference to:
 - developing the detail of an outline workshop curriculum with appropriate presenters and content
 - liaising with and providing general supervision of coaches
 - providing full briefing and feedback to presenters
 - facilitating whole group reflection, feedback, experience and identity, managing differences for constructive discussion
 - dealing with issues of quality assurance.

Participant recruitment, selection and preparation

- Following this pilot, future recruitment should be open access based on best equal opportunities practice, but within a domain quota framework
- Selection criteria should be developed from the existing list (to include as well, for example, a willingness to be challenged, to challenge, to contribute to peer learning and to work collaboratively) and the application form developed as appropriate to reflect the criteria and aims of the programme, and include referees
- Participants should be given more preparation at the beginning of a programme in terms of understanding, for example, learning styles and personality types, to develop better self-managed learning and to enable them to participate in and learn from different inputs as effectively as possible
- Consideration should be given to a more structured approach to working from and reviewing Personal Development Plans and using the learning log.

Workshops

- Workshops should have a clear overall framing, well articulated aims and be subject to careful planning so individual sessions complement each other, giving space and time for participant discussion and reflection
- Coaches could be used more in helping to develop a workshop programme
- Careful consideration should be given to the length of workshops and time distance between them, as appropriate to which future option is chosen

- Individual sessions should always have clear aims and learning objectives
- Sessions should take into account the range of learning styles and be pitched at an appropriate level to stimulate thinking
- More follow-up resources should be encouraged
- A workshop programme could provide a useful meeting and networking opportunity between cohorts of participants.

Action Learning Groups and Coaching

- These elements are key to any future provision and the existing coaches could be used as an important resource in building on the successes during the pilot
- Attention should be given to group membership, to avoid unnecessary conflicts between participant positions and to maximise the mix between cultural domains and types of organisational backgrounds
- Workplace visits could usefully be extended
- Consideration should be given to coaching training for participants who want to coach within a following cohort
- Coaches should have access to professional supervision.

Employer and sector engagement

- Employer agreements to provide opportunities for mutual feedback would support participants to put learning into practice in the immediate and wider workplace
- Other aspects of improving employer involvement would be a briefing for employers about the programme, examples of changes and impacts relating to previous participants, and involvement in evaluation
- Sponsoring agency commitments to develop experiences such as work shadowing would provide valuable further cultural sector context and leadership capacity building.

Support for next steps

- The programme should build in and support a legacy of learning from the initial input, for example by:
 - encouraging buddying and peer observation amongst group participants, particularly when action learning groups end
 - providing access to the higher education institution's professional development alumni provision (networking events, seminars, newsletters)
 - developing a web based cultural leadership resource bank (people and publications)
 - using participants as coaches and presenters for following cohorts.

Appendix I CONSULTEES

Participants

Carolyn	Best	Director	Knowle West Media Centre	Bristol	Media
Martin	Cooper	Strategy Manager and PE Adviser	Wiltshire County Council	Wiltshire	Sport
Lesley	Coulton	Head of PE	Plymouth University	Devon	Sport
Tamsin	Daniel	Museums & Heritage Officer	Penwith District Council	Cornwall	MLA
Cassiel	Dennis	Digital Media Development Manager	Creative Partnerships	Cornwall	Media
Kim	Egerton	Regional Development Manager	SkillsActive	Stroud	Sport
Julia	Gofton	Head of Visitor Services	Fleet Air Arm Museum	Somerset	Tourism
Pippa	Hassan	Project Director	Cornwall Film	Cornwall	Media
Angela	Haynes	Library & Information Officer	SWMLAC	Somerset	MLA
Kim	Hazeldine	Sports Development Officer	South Gloucestershire Council	Gloucestershire	Sport
Katie	Hodson	Visitor Services Manager	Roman Baths Museum and Pump Room	Bath	Tourism
Sam	Johnston	City Archivist	Plymouth & West Devon Record Office	Devon	MLA
John	Lane	Head of Library Services	Poole Borough Council Library Service	Dorset	MLA
Ros	Love	Countryside Adviser	The Countryside Agency	Devon	Tourism
Sara	Strickland	Co-Director	Suited & Booted	Bath	Media
Nickola	Moore	Arts Development Manager	Borough of Poole	Poole	Arts
Padraig	Naughton	Director	Arts & Disability Ireland	Ireland	Arts
Jeanette	Ratcliffe	Senior Policy Officer	Cornwall County Council	Cornwall	Heritage
Andy	Sanders	Cultural Development Manager	Tewkesbury Borough Council	Gloucestershire	Sport
Tamzyn	Smith	Development Manager	Creative Partnerships	Cornwall	Arts
Ruth	Smith	Property Manager	Tyntesfield	North Somerset	Tourism
Sarah-Jane	Meredith	Screen Development & Lottery Manager	South West Screen	Bristol	Media

Janet	Tall	Assistant County Archivist	Somerset Archive & Record Service	Somerset	MLA
Lisa	Tregale	Director	Beaford Arts	Devon	Arts
Rob	Wilson-North	Team Leader (Archaeology & Historic Buildings)	Exmoor National Park Authority	Somerset	Heritage
Barbara	Wood	Collections & Access Officer	South Somerset Museums & Heritage Services	Somerset	Heritage

Programme Managers

Jackie	Bagnall	Programme Manager, Leadership South West	University of Exeter		
Richard	Wells	Acting Director for the Enterprise & Participation Team	Dartington College of Arts		May 05 onwards

Programme Director

Pam Hayes

Coaches

Chrissie	Godfrey				
Josie	Sutcliffe				
Pippa	Warin	<i>also Joint Executive Director</i>	<i>Culture South West</i>		<i>September 05 onwards</i>

Commissioner

Sue	Kay	Executive Director	Culture South West		to September 05
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Workshop presenters

Paul	Birch	Lead consultant	Visionjuice		
Richard	Bolden	Research Fellow, Centre for Leadership Studies	University of Exeter		
Sally	Edgington	Head of Culture and Tourism	Government Office South West		
Susie	Fugle	Coach/team leader	Maynard Leigh Associates		
Jonathan	Gosling	Director, Centre for Leadership Studies	University of Exeter		
Sue	Kay	Cultural sector researcher, consultant and trainer			

Noreen	Orr	Research Officer	Culture South West
Simon	Ricketts	Consultant	Warwck-i
Diana	Theodores	Partner	Theatre for Business
Dee	Wilkinson		NHS

Workplace contacts

Robin	Andrew	Principal Policy Development Manager	Cornwall County Council
Stephen	Bird	Head of Heritage Services	Bath & North East Somerset Council
John	Croft		Wiltshire County Council
Miranda	Evans	Project Co-ordinator	Cornwall Film
Verna	Green	Head of Community Development	Tewkesbury Borough Council
Lindsey	Hall	Creative Director	Creative Partnerships
Chris	Kemp	Co-Director	Suited and Booted
Mark	Leaver	Director of Development	Screen South West
Heather	Macllwaine	Senior Countryside Officer	The Countryside Agency
Graham	Mottram	Director	Fleet Air Arm Museum
Caroline	Norbury	Chief Executive	Screen South West
Katie	Venner	Creative Associate	Creative Partnerships

Appendix II PROGRAMME OUTLINE

Date	Activity	Topic/presenters
April	Initial session with coach	PDP
27/28 April 2005	Workshop 1: 2 days	A Culture of Leadership <i>Jonathan Gosling</i> <i>Richard Bolden</i>
May/June	Coaching	
29/30 June	Workshop 2: 1.5 days	Self <i>Theatre4Business</i> <i>Susie Fugle</i>
July	Coaching	
	Action Learning Groups	
14 September	Workshop 3: 1 day	The People <i>Simon Ricketts</i>
October/November	Coaching	
	Action Learning Groups	
25 November	Workshop 4: 1 day	The Workplace <i>Paul Birch</i>
December/January	Coaching	
	Action Learning Groups	
25/26 January 2006	Workshop 5: 2 days	The Environment <i>Sue Kay & Mary Schwarz</i> <i>Sally Edgington</i> <i>Noreen Orr</i>
February/March	Coaching	
27/28 April	Workshop 6: 2 days	How do I value what I do/what next? <i>Dee Wilkinson</i> <i>Emma-Jane Cross</i> <i>Paul Birch</i>
April/May	Action Learning Groups	

Appendix III BUDGET

	TOTAL Budget	Projected actuals
INCOME		
HEIF 2 EXETER	30,000	30,000
HEIF 2 DARTINGTON	25,000	25,000
CULTURAL AGENCIES	45,000	45,000
PARTICIPANTS	9,000	8,100
	109,000	108,100
EXPENDITURE		
Accommodation	29,925	28,500
Workshop presenters	10,200	6,500
Travel	6,000	6,500
Coaching	29,725	31,000
Evaluation/event	3,500	5,500
Stationery	3,500	6,050
Administration	10,500	9,800
Project Management	9,550	10,000
Overheads	6,100	4,250
Spend total	109,000	108,100
Per delegate cost	3,633	4,004