Arts, alongside Education & Society and English, is a cornerstone of the British Council’s mission to build bridges of trust and understanding between peoples of the world. The British Council’s global network places it in a unique position to achieve significant impact and change by finding new ways of connecting and seeing each other through the arts.

Our arts programme lives and breathes the aspiration to inspire to transform lives – to offer creative artists, participants and audiences across the world life-changing and life-enhancing experiences. Our catalyst is the UK’s profound cultural and artistic strength and diversity.

We believe a direct experience of the arts contributes vitally to the development of society, shared prosperity and mutual attraction which strengthens cultural relations through inspiration.

Through our vision, outcomes and business model, we have a defined way of working in order to bring this direct experience to audiences globally.

**OUR VISION**

Under our motto ‘the new and the best’, we will focus on:

**NEW WORK**

We will focus on new work, but also aim to reach new audiences with new interpretation/imagining of older work and by established companies and artists. Our role will be as creative convener, occasionally commissioner and producer, always as partner, sometimes as funder.

**NEW AUDIENCES**

We will work to focus our approach to audiences within and beyond current reach – definition of audience, attraction of audience, and continued engagement of audience.

**NEW MODELS**

We will explore new models of programming, new collaborations, culture and conflict (through ODA and other opportunities), as well as our creative economy work, developing global intellectual and professional capacity. This will underpin and add distinctiveness to all areas of our portfolio.

**NEW TALENT**

We will work with partners to identify and develop new and emerging UK talent on the international stage in a spirit of our cultural relations mission.

**NEW IDEAS**

We will continue to engage with new ideas and new policy across the arts and cultural fields, and to promote the sector within new economic models across the world, but particularly in developing countries.
NEW MEDIA
We will lead thought and practice in the deployment of new technology in the arts in terms of content, engagement, reach and communication.

NEW SHOWCASING
We will work towards new models of showcasing UK work.

OUR OUTCOMES
Working through our vision, we will deliver outcomes for the arts in four key areas. These will guide all project development and evaluation:

ARTISTS PROSPER
- artistic practice of a broad and diverse range of artists in the UK and overseas developed by working internationally
- more UK work shown overseas; UK artists develop new markets; cultural and commercial growth for UK and international artists and creative practitioners
- UK artists and arts professionals have more contact and deeper connection with international counterparts; there is more international collaboration; this continues beyond our projects

SKILLS DEVELOP; INSTITUTIONS PROSPER
- cultural policy developed overseas, informed and inspired by the UK
- creative and cultural institutions developed overseas and in the UK, informed and inspired by one another
- improved leadership and skills in the creative sector overseas, informed and inspired by the UK
- civil society, social cohesion and freedom of expression overseas strengthened through art and culture, informed and inspired by the UK
- a strengthened international dimension to UK arts programming

AUDIENCES GROW
- international audiences developed for UK work, and UK audiences developed for international work, that inspires, entertains and transforms
- international audiences have access to the breadth and diversity of UK arts

UK REPUTATION GROWS
- by sharing best practice with the creative sector there is international acclaim for, and adaptation of, UK innovations for cultural and commercial growth
- by sharing respect for difference based on UK experience and values as a diverse society, international partners are influenced to adopt similar approaches
- by sharing ideas, international conversations on the big themes of our age are positively influenced by contributions of UK artists and creative thinkers
OUR BUSINESS MODEL

We achieve cultural relations through the arts, building opportunities for individuals and organisations worldwide, and trust between peoples. We have a clear business model for how we achieve this, with the following features:

WE SUPPORT ‘BUSINESS TO BUSINESS (B2B)’ CONNECTIONS

We work primarily with arts professionals in the UK and across the world (both practitioners and enablers) as well as policy makers to develop mutually beneficial connections and projects. Many of these connections lead to public exhibition, performance, publications and other activity, allowing us to influence mass publics worldwide, but we reach those best through arts professionals in the countries concerned.

WE ARE TRUSTED FOR OUR FOCUS ON ARTISTIC QUALITY AND INNOVATION

In a crowded sector we accumulate, curate and disseminate inspiration and information based on our ‘new and the best’ criteria. Arts professionals worldwide can trust the British Council to introduce them to only good quality work and innovative approaches.

OUR EXPERT PEOPLE WORLDWIDE ARE OUR UNIQUE SELLING POINT

Our team develops knowledge, networks and personal relationships with arts professionals worldwide and from that provide informed opinion, advice and assistance. Our ability to provide reliable advice is both appreciated by the sector and difficult for others to replicate.

THE COMBINATION OF UK AND COUNTRY EXPERTISE LEADS TO THE MOST EFFECTIVE OUTCOMES

The combination of art form expertise in the UK and country expertise across the world allows us to identify and support the opportunities that provide the greatest opportunity to benefit both participants in the UK and overseas, and hence the greatest chance of success and legacy.

PARTNERSHIPS ARE CENTRAL TO EVERYTHING THAT WE DO

Through working with partners who see the value of international connections in the arts, we bring their expertise, credibility and networks, leading to better programmes and greater impact. We access their resources (financial and non-financial) through a strategy of bringing in country funding partners for country-specific activity, UK and multinational commercial partnerships for significant showcasing work, and government, trusts and foundations support for specific co-created programmes.

OUR SINGLE GLOBAL TEAM INTERPRETS THE VISION IN WAYS APPROPRIATE TO INDIVIDUAL MARKETS

Through a network of regional arts leads working as part of their region’s management team, who are also on the single global management team for the arts, we implement the vision in ways appropriate for individual countries and regions and identify and follow up on major new global opportunities.

To find out more about our work, visit www.britishcouncil.org/arts, follow us at @BritishArts or www.facebook.com/Arts.BritishCouncil

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