

Cultural Heritage for Inclusive Growth Collection

People-centred approaches to cultural heritage and sustainable development

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The Cultural Heritage for Inclusive Growth Collection

Cultural Heritage for Inclusive Growth (CH4IG) is a British Council action research programme which, since 2018, has been exploring how local culture can improve the lives of individuals around the world. The essays in this collection were originally commissioned by the British Council and Nordicity as independent thematic studies during the pilot phase of the programme. They have since been updated by their authors and edited for the British Council by Inherit.

The essays are published as part of the British Council's What Works Cultural Heritage Protection programme, which is designed to support better outcomes for heritage protection and local communities by bringing the best available evidence to practitioners and other decision-

makers across the international heritage protection sector.

Together, the essays explore the role of cultural heritage in bringing about the change which is needed to secure a sustainable future for people and the planet. The collection explores the relationship between heritage and sustainable development from different geographical, topical and philosophical perspectives. The diverse essays are bound by common themes, namely that cultural heritage is at the heart of human development; that cultural relations create conditions in which human development can occur, and; that human development is enabled by people-centred approaches and transparent, accountable and participatory governance.

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A co-production activity consultation during the redevelopment of Derby Silk Mill.

Front cover photograph © Ewan Mathers/Derby Museums

Introduction

A key thesis from the British Council's 2018 *Cultural Heritage for Inclusive Growth* research report is that 'A people-centred approach to heritage, that benefits all levels of society, will bring social cohesion and economic growth to emerging economies and developing countries.' The authors note:

In the UK, there is a 'people-centred' approach to heritage and a deep-seated understanding of inclusive provision. This approach promotes wider inclusion and diversity, and creates value, which generates growth and prosperity that can be felt by the wider population.¹

This essay explores the concept of 'people-centredness' as an approach and philosophy, and as a context for work relating to cultural heritage and inclusive growth. The ultimate purpose of this essay is to suggest how understanding of 'people-centredness' might help to advance learning from the Cultural Heritage for Inclusive Growth programme and amplify its innovation as part of the British Council's wider work in international relations and cultural exchange.

We see the Cultural Heritage for Inclusive Growth programme as radical in its aspirations, representing a move from the institutional norm of philanthropic funding and centrally controlled international development to a new, highly devolved approach, enabling local activism and control. We hope this essay will contribute to funding and resource interventions working in a more democratic and people-empowering way.

In this essay, we ask whether there is such a thing as a 'people-centred approach' – and if so, how we might recognise and define its characteristics and learn from situations in which it has been put into practice.

The research behind this essay sought to address the following key research questions:

- How (in the UK and worldwide) are people-centred approaches being used?
- In arts, culture and heritage projects?

- In international development projects?
- What are the defining characteristics of people-centred approaches and what constitutes best practice?
- Is there any evidence as to whether people-centred projects are contributing to inclusive growth?
- What approaches and guidelines can be developed from this evidence?
- What role can the British Council play in promoting and supporting people-centred approaches to cultural heritage worldwide?

These questions were studied through:

A literature review which explored the roots of people-centred philosophy and practice in the arts, community and international development and how they are applied in cultural heritage, considering the implications for the emerging field of cultural heritage and inclusive growth and sustainable development. Although worldwide research was considered, in practice there was an anglophone and Western European bias to the review.

Practitioner interviews, in which we asked selected practitioners involved in cultural heritage to share their views on the critical characteristics of people-centred approaches – what works and why. As with the literature review, although worldwide practitioners were involved, there was an anglophone and Western European bias, with most interviewees having been drawn from The Audience Agency's UK networks.

A review of the pilot projects undertaken as part of the British Council's Cultural Heritage for Inclusive Growth programme and their adoption and experience of people-centred approaches; this aspect of the research was not conceived as an evaluation in the strict sense but an exploration. Although it would have been ideal to speak directly with the in-country project

teams and partners as part of the research – particularly with those who worked directly with local communities – this was unfortunately not possible for practical reasons. As a result, our view of the pilots has mainly been derived from the core British Council team and the programme evaluators (Nordicity), although brief written responses were received from two of the three in-country teams.

We must also acknowledge that we brought some premeditation to the research and cannot claim to be wholly disinterested. Our starting position, based on our own experience, was that people-centred approaches tend to lead to more democratic outcomes. From that point on, however, we continued with open-minded curiosity and no predefined conclusions in our sights. We were, if anything, surprised by the level of convergence of views about good and effective practice and learned much that was new to us. In this sense we feel we are, like the British Council team, on a journey of discovery.

The research has been fascinating and productive; a privilege to conduct. We thank all our interviewees and contributors.

Context and definitions

The meaning of cultural heritage

Before examining people-centred approaches to cultural heritage for inclusive growth, we must first pause briefly to define the meaning of ‘cultural heritage.’ Although there are a wide variety of possible definitions, for the sake of simplicity we will use the one put forward in the British Council *Cultural Heritage for Inclusive Growth* report of 2018, which includes:

1. Tangible cultural heritage
- Movable cultural heritage (paintings, sculptures, coins, manuscripts);
 - Immovable cultural heritage (monuments, archaeological sites, and so on);
 - Underwater cultural heritage (shipwrecks, underwater ruins and cities).
2. Intangible cultural heritage:
- Oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events;
 - Knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe;
 - Knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts.²

This includes a large part of what might be considered ‘arts and culture’ by funders and policy-makers in the United Kingdom (at least), as well as the historic sites and museums commonly considered ‘heritage’.

Where does cultural heritage fit in the inclusive growth story?

A UNESCO think piece from 2012 on integrating culture into the global development agenda argues for the centrality of culture because it ‘advances a human-centred approach to development that takes into account cultural

diversity and the complexities of societies and local contexts.’ It continues:

Culture is inherent to development because it constantly evolves and reflects its history, mores, institutions and attitudes, its social movements, conflicts and struggles, and the configurations of political power, internally and in the world at large. In addition to representing a source of identity, innovation and creativity for individuals and communities, culture reflects people’s adaptation to the environment over long periods of time, and often embodies patterns of production and consumption that are more sustainable by design.³

The evaluation of the Great Places scheme in the UK makes the point that culture can be used as a tool to empower local communities:

Trying to get people to engage in the democratic process is hard; most people are scared and feel they don’t know enough to make a contribution. But culture removes that barrier ...⁴

Many of the practitioners we spoke to felt that cultural heritage was much more than a commodity to trade in pursuit of growth but was, in itself, the conductor of wellbeing and unity, providing a vital connection between people, and with their past and future. Culture is so innately people-centred that it brings humanity and the possibility of engagement to any economic or social development.

Inclusive growth – Amartya Sen and ‘Development as Freedom’

Economic growth has long been a policy priority for both national governments and international development efforts. Both the theory of ‘inclusive growth,’ and its execution as a policy priority, are far more recent.

Thinking around inclusive growth has developed from the Indian economist Amartya Sen’s work on

human development. In *Development as Freedom*, he argued that:

Development can be seen ... as a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy. Focusing on human freedoms contrasts with narrower views of development, such as identifying development with the growth of gross national product, or with the rise in personal incomes, or with industrialization, or with technological advance, or with social modernization ... freedoms depend also on other determinants, such as social and economic arrangements (for example, facilities for education and health care) as well as political and civil rights.⁵

In short, Sen argues that economic growth is not an end in itself but only a means to increasing freedom. As he continues:

Viewing development in terms of expanding substantive freedoms directs attention to the

ends that make development important, rather than merely to some of the means that, *inter alia*, play a prominent part in the process.⁶

Modern definitions of inclusive growth

In the twenty years since the publication of Sen’s work, these ideas have achieved a much wider circulation, with predictably differing focuses of emphasis. There are as many different definitions as there are policy-makers and academics using the term. Paloma Duran, of the Sustainable Development Goals Fund, argues that ‘when you ask five economists to define [inclusive growth], you will likely end up with six answers.’⁷

Below we have offered a range of answers. These are not exhaustive, and are intended to represent a range of voices, from worldwide policy leaders to local governments looking at the day-to-day implications of inclusive growth for local residents.⁸

OECD	‘... economic growth that is distributed fairly across society and creates opportunities for all.’ ⁹
Royal Society of Arts Inclusive Growth Commission	‘Enabling as many people as possible to contribute and benefit from growth: Socially. Benefitting people across the labour market spectrum, including groups that face particularly high barriers to high quality employment. Place-based. Addressing inequalities in opportunities between different parts of the country and within economic geographies.’ ¹⁰
Bristol (UK) Inclusive Growth Strategy	‘People-centred growth seeks to change the narrative from being simply about creating jobs and homes (by volume) to focusing on better outcomes for people through skills and education, wellbeing and the built environment where people live, work and play.’ ¹¹
Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs	‘Inclusive growth is people-centred, creates equal access to resources and promotes employment. The nature of growth must be such that it does not negatively impact the environment or contribute to harmful climate change.’ ¹²

Table 1: Modern definitions of inclusive growth

2. Lewis et al, 2018, p 8

3. UNESCO, 2012

4. The Audience Agency & Golant Media Ventures, 2019, p 17

5. Sen, 1999, p 3

6. Sen, 1999, p 3

7. Duran, 2015

8. For further discussion see Alexander, 2015, and the essay by Samuel, George & George in this essay collection

9. <https://www.oecd.org/inclusive-growth/>

10. RSA Inclusive Growth Commission, 2017

11. Bristol City Council, 2019

12. <https://www.enterprise-development.org/agency-strategies-and-coordination/danish-international-development-agency-danida/>

Is inclusive growth people-centred by definition?

The human development approach pioneered by Amartya Sen is sometimes described as ‘people-centred development,’ reflecting the idea that ‘the improvement of people’s lives [is] the central objective of development.’¹³ It could be argued that all truly inclusive growth is inherently people-centred, as the definitions above suggest.

The UN Development Program discusses ‘human development’ in terms inspired by Sen:

... ‘human development’ is about expanding the choices available to people in order to live valuable lives. Economic growth is important, but it is truly only a means for enlarging those choices. A fundamental part of expanding those choices is building human capabilities, the range of things that people can achieve in their life. We believe strongly that people’s well-being and their quality of life is the most important measure of whether ‘development’ is successful. Thus, people must be at the centre of human development, both as beneficiaries and as drivers, as individuals and in groups. People must be empowered with the tools and knowledge to build their own communities, states and nations.¹⁴

It has been argued that inclusive growth ‘also requires non-discriminatory participation by large segments of the population for its inclusiveness to be realized.’¹⁵

Looking at some approaches to ‘inclusive growth,’ we might consider it akin to UNDP’s ‘human development,’ and therefore democratic and people-centred by definition. For example, as we have seen, the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs states that: ‘Inclusive growth is people-centred, creates equal access to resources and promotes employment.’¹⁶

Yet other views of inclusive growth are narrower – note that the RSA definition specifies ‘enabling as many people as possible’ rather than all people ‘to contribute and benefit from growth.’¹⁷

Critiques of inclusive growth question whether it is really as radically inclusive a concept as it might seem. For example, a policy provocation by CLES, a UK think tank championing progressive local economics, argues that:

In practice, Inclusive Growth is less about affecting change to the prevailing market liberal approach to economic growth, but more about what happens once we have growth, no matter how unfairly it was created, or the narrowness of those involved in creating it. This is limited and limiting ... in practice, Inclusive Growth could be mere cover for economic stasis, rather than meaningful action on social exclusion and economic injustices.¹⁸

Neil Lee, a Professor of Economic Geography at London School of Economics, says he is:

... sympathetic to the overall concept of Inclusive Growth, which represents an important, clever and overdue attempt to link economic development to distribution. However, it ... remains a fuzzy concept which is often vaguely and inconsistently defined and is rapidly becoming a buzzword used to signal progressive intent but with relatively little evidence, to date, of actual implementation.¹⁹

Environmental critiques have also been made of the concept of inclusive growth.²⁰ Some thought leaders within the UK culture sector (and outside the UK) are uneasy about the prioritisation of growth, feeling that it is not ultimately sustainable.²¹ An alternative, which has won support within the UK culture sector, is the ‘doughnut economics’ approach developed by economist, Kate Raworth:

Humanity’s 21st century challenge is to meet the needs of all within the means of the planet. In other words, to ensure that no one falls short on life’s essentials (from food and housing to healthcare and political voice), while ensuring that collectively we do not overshoot our pressure on Earth’s life-supporting systems, on which we fundamentally depend ...²²

Many on the frontline in the world of cultural heritage and social justice believe there is a causal link between people-centred methods and authentically fair outcomes. However, when assessing specific projects, it will be worth keeping in mind that it may be possible for a project that is people-centred in its methods to lead to growth that is not truly inclusive – similarly it may well be possible for a project which is not people-centred in its methods to lead to inclusive growth that improves people’s lives and redistributes wealth. We must be careful to distinguish between *methods and outcomes* when assessing people-centred approaches to cultural heritage for inclusive growth.

13. Stewart, 2019

14. UNDP, 2011

15. Alexander, 2015, p 4; see also Klasen, 2010

16. <https://www.enterprise-development.org/agency-strategies-and-coordination/danish-international-development-agency-danida/>

17. RSA Inclusive Growth Commission, 2017

18. Burch & McInroy, 2018, p 4

19. Lee, 2019

20. Essex & Read, 2017

21. Interviews by The Audience Agency

22. <https://www.kateraworth.com/doughnut/>

Established thinking: The literature on the people-centred approach

A wide range of disciplines and methods converge in an approach that could be considered ‘people-centred.’ However, not all of these are defined explicitly as such. In this review we have not confined ourselves to methods that call themselves ‘people-centred,’ but also assessed other related (but distinct) concepts, including:

Heritage specific	Community archaeology, living heritage approach ²³
Design methodologies	Co-design, user-centred design, human-centred design
Democratic methodologies	Citizen participation, cultural democracy, shared decision-making
Asset-based approaches	Asset-based community development, networked heritage ²⁴
Participatory arts	Community arts, community cultural development (CCD), community arts and cultural development (CACD), social practice, participatory practice, community-engaged practice
Other disciplines	Participatory futures ²⁵

Table 2: Concepts related to ‘people-centred’

As with inclusive growth, there are at least as many different definitions of people-centredness as there are people defining it – and for the moment it appears that there is less orthodoxy around the concept than around inclusive growth. Therefore, a particular approach may be people-centred by some definitions, but not others. The following sections will attempt to give a survey of the varying theories and frameworks that have been put forward.

As a starting point, UK cultural consultant, Hilary Jennings, has identified two basic ways of looking

at being people-centred:²⁶

1. Power: who makes the decisions? Who has input into them?
2. Process: what approaches, methods, facilitation techniques are used to involve people and understand their needs and desires?

Is people-centredness a right?

People-centred approaches may not merely be

‘nice to have’ when it comes to cultural heritage. Participation in heritage can be seen as a human right.

For example, the *Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society* recognises ‘that rights relating to cultural heritage are inherent in the right to participate in cultural life, as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.’²⁷ In an article on cultural heritage and democratic participation, the signatories undertake to ‘encourage everyone to participate in the process of identification, study, interpretation, protection, conservation and presentation of the cultural heritage’ and ‘public reflection and debate on the opportunities and challenges which the cultural heritage represents.’²⁸

A report to the United Nations on cultural rights finds that the ‘right of access to and enjoyment of cultural heritage forms part of international human rights law.’²⁹ As a result, it is recommended that:

Concerned communities and relevant individuals should be consulted and invited to actively participate in the whole process of identification, selection, classification, interpretation, preservation/safeguard, stewardship and development of cultural heritage. No inscription on UNESCO lists relating to cultural heritage or national lists or registers should be requested or granted without the free, prior and informed consent of the concerned communities. More generally, States should seek the free, prior and informed consent of source communities before adopting measures concerning their specific cultural heritage, in particular in the case of indigenous peoples, in accordance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.³⁰

Therefore, a people-centred approach to cultural heritage could be defined as an approach that fully involves people in processes around cultural heritage and seeks the ‘free, prior and informed consent’ of source communities.

In a study for Demos on what the UK can learn from international experience on democratising engagement, Andrea Cornwell (a political anthropologist at SOAS University of London) argues that taking a democratic approach to engagement results in a major shift, not only in methods, but in people’s status:

Where participation becomes a right rather than something that depends on the good will of government, the ground shifts. Those on the receiving end of public services become not just beneficiaries with needs, or consumers with preferences, but citizens with entitlements.³¹

Is ‘power to the people’ an essential part of people-centredness?

Participatory and people-centred approaches in cultural heritage draw some of their inspiration from wider work on citizen participation. A touchstone is the work of civil servant, Sherry Arnstein, in the United States in the 1960s. She described citizen participation as:

... the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future.³²

Her ladder of citizen participation³³ may be one way of assessing the extent to which a project is people-centred:

8 Citizen Control	Citizen Control
7 Delegation	
6 Partnership	
5 Placation	Tokenism
4 Consultation	
3 Informing	
2 Therapy	Non-Participation
1 Manipulation	

Table 3: Arnstein’s ladder of citizen participation

23. ICCROM, 2015
24. RSA, 2016
25. Ramos et al, 2019
26. Interview with Hilary Jennings, 25th February 2020

27. Council of Europe, 2005
28. Council of Europe, 2005
29. Shaheed, 2011
30. Shaheed, 2011
31. Cornwell, 2008
32. Arnstein, 1969
33. Arnstein, 1969

More recently, the power analysis method developed by Raji Hunjan and Soumountha Keophilavong, as part of a study for the Carnegie UK Trust and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, provides a framework ‘to understand and demonstrate how those with least power in society could actively engage and exercise power in decision making processes.’³⁴

A part of this framework looks at the ‘spaces’ where power is exercised (ie ‘the places where opportunities for formal and informal interaction help people to shape the decisions and rules that affect their lives’), and hence the different ‘entry points for change.’ It includes the idea that ‘less powerful people’ can ‘come together to create their own space, and set their own agendas.’³⁵

Closed	Invited	Claimed
Spaces are closed when decisions are made behind closed doors – often without providing opportunities for inclusion.	Spaces are invited when people are asked to participate in decision-making processes as citizens, beneficiaries or users. Although these spaces could become opportunities for genuine collaboration, agendas are often pre-determined.	Spaces are created/claimed when less powerful people come together to create their own space and set their own agendas. ³⁶

Table 4: Characterisation of ‘spaces’ where power is exercised

A simpler way of thinking about this might be by making the classic distinction between whether a project is for, with or by a particular community.³⁷

A more complex and dimensional approach is offered in the ‘Power Cube,’ developed by several contributors. Alongside the dimension of closed/invited/claimed spaces, it considers power in its visible/hidden/invisible forms which manifests itself at local/national/global levels.³⁸

Also worth considering is White’s typology of participation, which offers a more complex view of Arnstein’s ladder.³⁹

Form	What’s in it for the implementing agency?	What’s in it for participants?	What participation is for
Nominal	Legitimisation	Inclusion	Display
Instrumental	Efficiency	Costs (time, resources contributed)	As a means to achieve cost effectiveness
Representative	Sustainability	Leverage	To give people a voice
Transformative	Empowerment	Empowerment	As a means and an end

Table 5: White’s typology of participation

How has cultural heritage adopted and adapted citizen participation?

Community arts/heritage practitioners have traditionally strongly aligned with Arnstein and her legacy of citizen participation. Arnstein’s background was in public health and welfare policy, while the Power Cube is often applied in decisions about local economy.

Cultural practitioners with different practices, seeking more nuanced social outcomes through cultural/creative participation, have adapted the model. It has, for example, been transformed into a ‘ladder of participation for heritage management.’⁴⁰ 64 Million Artists have also created a participation scale of ‘incremental stages towards Cultural Democracy.’⁴¹ These add activities and approaches which are inherently creative or cultural; about exploring personal or community creativity or identity with a view to achieving social outcomes.

However, it is not just practice and outcomes that differ. In community development, intervention often comes in the form of activity commissioned or influenced by a local authority or social service, close to the state. In the case of cultural heritage, work intended to have a direct social outcome is often initiated by cultural organisations and institutions working with – but arms-length from – the state. It may be somewhat disingenuous, but

these organisations perhaps perceive themselves as more benign and enabling, their interventions based on contributing specialist ‘expert’ cultural skills, know-how and resources to the community. 64 Million Artists puts the case for Cultural Democracy in practice to cultural organisations:

Why you? Why would you be invested in this way of working, and what can you change?

- Because you care about art and culture and in the widest enjoyment of cultural lives across the country;
- Because you believe in democracy and equality;
- Because you have influence in the sector ...⁴²

Cultural manifestations of Arnstein’s ladder reflect this position. The Audience Agency’s Spectrum of Engagement, inspired by Chrissie Tiller’s work (see below), and based on evaluation with many community arts and cultural projects (including Creative People and Places projects in the UK),⁴³ takes a view of people-centredness from the perspective of an interventionist organisation. It recognises the interventions of an organisation across a spectrum of modes, increasingly people-centred, but all ultimately centring on the organisation’s role.

34. Hunjan & Keophilavong, 2010, p 1

35. Hunjan & Keophilavong, 2010, p 16

36. Hunjan & Keophilavong, 2010, p 16

37. For further discussion of typologies, see Chrissie Tiller Associates, 2014

38. <https://www.powercube.net/analyse-power/what-is-the-powercube/>

39. From White’s ‘Depoliticising development,’ quoted in Cornwall, 2008, p 26

40. Chan, 2016, p 15

41. 64 Million Artists, 2018, p 8 (based on Jeremy Heimans and Henry Timms of Kings College participation scale)

42. <https://64millionartists.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/culturaldemocracy.pdf>

43. <https://www.theaudienceagency.org/asset/1942/download>

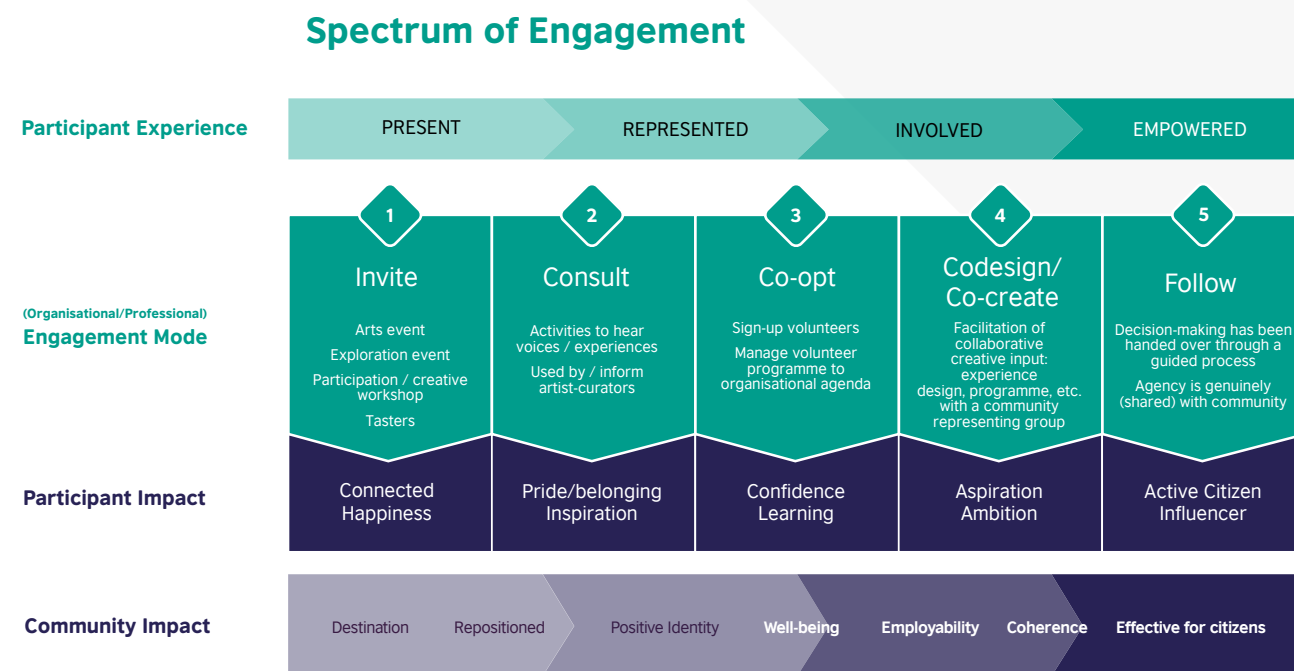


Figure 1: The Audience Agency's Spectrum of Engagement

In the Spectrum of Engagement model, 'empowered' participants take on decision-making through a guided process and an agency that is 'shared' with community' by the organisation or professional that is seeking to engage them. This organisation-centred model assumes a legacy of actions or campaigns initiated within communities themselves. The implication is that organisations might then create new 'spaces,' operating within the 'invited' mode of Hunjan and Keophilavong's framework.

The emergence of Cultural Democracy

Some socially engaged cultural practitioners align around the concept of 'Cultural Democracy'. This proposes that the benefits of cultural and creative participation are distributed more widely, notions of cultural value are recognised more equitably, and decisions about the provision and resourcing of cultural opportunity are made democratically.

The theory of cultural democracy assumes that there is not only one culture, but many cultures in a society. Cultural democracy will allow people to

choose to be active participants rather than just passive receivers of culture. A cultural policy which aims at creating cultural democracy must necessarily be decentralised.⁴⁴ It is, in short, a policy or process for 'increasing access to the means of cultural production, distribution and analysis'.⁴⁵ It is sometimes defined in contrast to the 'democratisation of culture' – a top-down process whereby:

... the 'official' culture, typically represented by large and well-funded institutions, is made accessible to non-participating communities, often in the belief that it will do them good.⁴⁶

In opposition, Cultural Democracy is closely associated with the principles and practice of citizen participation and its achievement demands wholesale adoption of people-centred policy and practice. It is level 5 on The Audience Agency's Spectrum of Engagement, a short hop away from being a manifesto for people-centredness.

Since the term was first coined in the early 20th century, Cultural Democracy's popularity and usage has waxed and waned, variously in the UK, Europe and the US, challenging policy, it has been

championed by the community arts movement.⁴⁷ Cultural Democracy has been used more in a policy context than in a practical one, with much of the debate around it channelled towards campaigning and lobbying funders and policy-makers.

In recent years, however, the concept of Cultural Democracy has enjoyed a revival more widely in Europe and has galvanised practitioners. In the UK, people-centred organisations like Fun Palaces, Creative People & Places and 64 Million Artists, have now taken up the Cultural Democracy flag, all three taking a pragmatic view of Cultural Democracy, less as a utopian ideal forever confounded by the state and more as an achievable way of working. From Fun Palaces' self-organising toolkit to 64 Million Artists' Cultural Democracy In Practice, these organisations are finding ways to show *how* Cultural Democracy works rather than debating if it can. Significantly, it is also influencing arts policy: Arts Council England's 2020 Let's Create new policy framework acknowledges this influence, despite criticism that it represents 'Cultural Democracy Lite'.⁴⁸ It remains to be seen how far the COVID-19 crisis will help or hinder progress.

Pragmatism or Power?

Are citizen participation/Cultural Democracy models also a moral hierarchy, with participatory approaches judged to be inherently better or more worthy? Arnstein's ladder dismisses consultation, for instance, as 'tokenism,' arguing that 'participation without redistribution of power is an empty and frustrating process for the powerless'.⁴⁹ A study of the grassroots York Past and Present project notes:

... the limitations of the consultation methods undertaken by local government and public organisations like museums ... consultation is generally not designed in ways which enable

people to engage with the complexity of the issues, to take into account other people's needs or views, or to take responsibility for the outcome. Consultation, therefore, has a range of negative effects and often just exacerbates cynicism, from both decision-makers and members of the public.⁵⁰

On the other hand, The Audience Agency's Spectrum of Engagement suggests that a pragmatic 'journey or spectrum' across different modes of engagement is more helpful than a hierarchy of value, and that the intent and quality of execution of different modes of engagement can lend them integrity:

The idea of a spectrum takes us away from hierarchical models ... which suggest that only the higher echelons of engagement are legitimate or valued.⁵¹

The Audience Agency's Anne Torreggiani comments that:

What we have observed is that organisations aspiring to increase their social impact often need to move to and fro across this spectrum.

It is challenging to jump in at the level 5 deep-end, without first developing the relevant skills and sensibilities required, and without taking your community/ies with you.⁵²

In her analysis of the Creative People and Places programme, UK cultural consultant, Chrissie Tiller, notes that 'CPP responses to the question of participation were equally divided between those who found the ladder more useful and those who favoured the spectrum'.⁵³

While 64 Million Artists privilege the higher ends of the spectrum, they also recognise that getting there requires a journey: 'Whilst true Cultural Democracy has a number of absolutes, the path towards it can be incremental and iterative. Not everything needs to be done at once'.⁵⁴ Cornwall

44. Council of Europe, 1976

45. Matarasso & Landry, 1999

46. Hadley, 2017

47. Kelly, 1984

48. <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2020/jan/27/arts-council-england-culture-in-every-village-town-and-city-strategy-lets-create>

49. Arnstein, 1969, p 216

50. Brigham, Brigham & Graham, 2018, p 24

51. The Audience Agency and Golant Media Ventures, 2019, p 15

52. Torreggiani, 2018, p 302

53. Tiller, 2019, pp 40-41

54. 64 Million Artists, 2018, p 8

points out that even tokenistic participation ‘can open political space that can be used to put other agendas on the table,’ and that even the most potentially transformative process may not always be welcomed by those whom it is meant to engage.⁵⁵

The Shared Decision-Making toolkit developed for Creative People and Places recommends that organisations considering shared decision-making should carefully consider what level of delegation is appropriate for them. It highlights one important question: ‘How will you make sure you are honest and upfront with everyone involved (members of the public, participants, artists, and partners) about where the ultimate decision-making will sit?’⁵⁶

The Influential OF/BY/FOR ALL Change Network looks to their concept of ‘Partner Power’⁵⁷ to point to a solution in active collaboration.

Cultural and creative participation for inclusive growth

A caveat, however, is that while people-centred practice in the cultural sector has developed its own pragmatic adaptations (see following section), this has mostly been in pursuit of a wide range of social outcomes rather than inclusive growth *per se*. The power dynamics related to local economics are somewhat different – including issues of ownership, market forces and potential partnerships with powerful commercial and state partners and investors.⁵⁸ In the context of inclusive growth then, the assumption that benign intentions justify an incremental approach, and a gradual and more or less committed transfer of power, may need to be examined and challenged. A more strenuous adoption of tools like PowerCube may be appropriate.

Who benefits from engagement?

People-centred practice with reference to community

development necessitates a focus on activating improvements – infrastructure, services and so on. In the case of cultural heritage, as we have noted, the dimensions are different: being involved may take the form of an organisation inspiring creation or creative participation, or engagement as a visitor or audience member. So far, we have mainly discussed people-centred approaches as methods of organising or creation. However, we might ask whether we also ought to consider people-centred outcomes – not only in the broad sense of inclusive growth, but in the more specific sense of people benefitting by *engaging with* cultural heritage.

We have already discussed the idea that access to cultural heritage is a human right.⁵⁹ There is also evidence that cultural participation leads to more inclusive communities.⁶⁰

Cultural heritage projects and funding programmes in the UK and Europe (at least) with a people-centred approach tend to focus on achieving more democratic access to cultural experiences. For the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the one mandatory outcome of all its funded projects is that ‘a wider range of people will be involved in heritage.’ For Arts Council England’s Creative People and Places programme, a central aim is that ‘more people from places of least engagement experience, and are inspired by, the arts.’

In this sense, people-centred is a means to extending the whole range of implied benefits of cultural engagement and consumption to the whole community, and indeed, further prioritising their access and entitlement above that.

Yet there is an acute dilemma when the desired instrumental benefits of cultural heritage relate to growth driven by outsiders – ie tourists, house-buyers or a new workforce.

Tourism is a major focus of efforts to use cultural heritage to drive inclusive growth. Veghes goes so far as to state that ‘Cultural heritage deserves and needs a cultural tourist, a ‘consumer’ in marketing terms.’⁶¹ Yet even within privileged Western

European cities such as Amsterdam, Barcelona or Florence, over-tourism runs the risk of driving local residents out of their homes and creating city centres that are designed around visitors from elsewhere rather than local communities.⁶² Kalliopi Fouseki, Senior Lecturer at the UCL Institute for Sustainable Heritage, has highlighted the issues around heritage tourism:

... heritage tourism is an economic solution that promises to bridge conservation and development by highlighting the economic value of heritage resources. Nevertheless, the building of a lucrative and viable heritage tourism sector is challenging, as it presupposes collaborative strategies and the balancing of growth with social equity and environmental quality – both ecological and cultural.⁶³

Similarly, ICCROM highlight that:

... at heritage places that appear to be successful visitor attractions, the question needs to be asked if other communities, such as local residents, are still allowed to enjoy their heritage as it was originally intended and if they derive benefits from it. These situations need evaluating in terms that go beyond visitor numbers and financial income to include, for example, measurements of how healthy the related community of place is.⁶⁴

‘Artwashing’⁶⁵ is a new name – and some argue a cynical new strategy – for the old problem of organic gentrification that takes place in and around places of intensive cultural and creative activity. It is inherently anti-people-centred. Short-term benefits to a community lead to its ultimate destruction or displacement.

In the case of both systemic culture-led regeneration and tourism development, a rigorous people-centred mindset and process is potentially the only way to resolve the dilemma. A people-centred framework is essential both to enabling a community to set its own definitions of sustainability and to prioritise the benefits to insiders and outsiders accordingly. Fouseki argues that ‘collaborative decision-making and bottom-up

approaches are increasingly understood as critical to sustainable tourism development in both academia ... and international policy.’⁶⁶

Does people-centredness guarantee inclusion?

Using people-centred approaches does not guarantee inclusive participation. For example, *pro forma* planning consultations (the example given is Finnish but is of broader applicability):

... which have clearly defined and limited participatory elements, usually combined with a standard set of methods such as consultation periods, public hearings and inquiries. More often than not a select group of active citizens responds to them, leaving substantial sections of communities practically excluded. The groups implicitly marginalised in the interaction are often likely to be disadvantaged minorities, such as low-income people, ethnic minorities, young people and children.⁶⁷

It is often said that ‘80% of success is just showing up’ – this is no less true of cultural heritage than of other spheres. Showing up is by no means a neutral act and cannot be expected. As Anne Torreggiani relates:

... theatre-maker and disability activist Jess Thom point[s] out that exclusion is often accidental, caused by ignorance not bad intention. Inclusion on the other hand is not. As many people demonstrated, genuinely including people takes time, commitment, trust, resource and most importantly a willingness to re-orientate around the needs and interests of a given community.⁶⁸

The challenge of getting away from ‘the usual suspects’ – the motivated, the privileged, those who are already influential in a community – is frequently mentioned by those attempting to put people-centred approaches into practice. As Oswald, Apgar, Thorpe and Gaventa argue, in a report for the UK Institute of Development Studies:

... a risk of all participatory processes is that they get co-opted by elites or certain groups.

55. Cornwell, 2008, p 26

56. White, 2019, p 7

57. <https://blog.ofbyforall.org/tools/partner-power>

58. Lewis et al, 2018

59. Shaheed, 2011

60. Council of Europe, 2017

61. Veghes, 2018, p 350

62. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jan/25/overtourism-in-europe-historic-cities-sparks-backlash>

63. Dragouni & Fouseki, 2018

64. Court & Wijesuriya, 2015, p 4

65. Academic and activist Stephen Pritchard writes widely on the subject: <http://culturaldemocracy.uk/>

66. Dragouni & Fouseki, 2018

67. Häyrynen, 2018, p 13

68. Torreggiani, 2018, pp 310-11

This is why it is so important to think carefully about who is participating. Due to practicalities, it is very likely that ‘representatives’ of certain groups or communities will participate. However, this throws up questions: How have those representatives been selected/chosen? Who are they claiming to represent?⁶⁹

Similarly, Cornwell says that:

... the label ‘the usual suspects’ does a disservice to those whose experience and commitment is often such an important asset to communities. But relying exclusively on those who put themselves forward carries evident dangers of reinforcing existing patterns of inclusion and exclusion ... It may well be the case that neither elected nor community representatives effectively represent the interests and concerns of marginalised social groups.⁷⁰

In some projects, it might be expected that a small active group of participants could disseminate benefits to a wider local community (or community of interest). In other projects – and likely in most cases – serious effort will need to be given to engaging a wide and representative group of participants, particularly in communities that are significantly divided and/or have significantly disadvantaged minority groups.

There are many good reasons why people might not be excited about showing up, as Cornwell makes clear:

... committed bureaucrats can create the most transformative and potentially empowering participatory process – and find that there are few or no takers for it, because people have become cynical or bored, or simply don’t have time to take part. Much comes to depend on the immediate and broader context: on how people feel about the government, what they expect from it, how disgruntled they feel about public service provision, how willing they feel to give up their time, how connected they feel to their communities ... If nothing much has come out of taking part in the past, there may be very little incentive to do so again.⁷¹

There are particular issues around inclusion when

powerful institutions and/or privileged people are dealing with marginalised groups, such as indigenous peoples. For example, von Lieres and Kahane examined the role of Aboriginal people in a process of democratic deliberation put in motion by the Canadian government in 2001, and found that:

... the successes and shortcomings of the Romanow Commission in including Aboriginal people in deliberations are tied to three key features of deliberative design:

1. The extent to which the process is **reflexive**, in the sense of giving participants a deliberative say in defining the terms of their participation, the issues they will address, the form deliberation will take, and so on.
2. The extent to which public involvement is **recursive**, so that citizen deliberation takes place from the beginning, applying to the range of decisions made.
3. The existence of **separate spaces** in which members of marginalized groups can reflect on dynamics of power and exclusion, and negotiate questions of common agendas, strategies, identities. These separate spaces can take many forms, from parallel deliberative processes, to opportunities for caucusing within heterogeneous deliberations.⁷²

Power and false consensus

Whose Cake Is It Anyway, ‘a collaborative investigation into engagement and participation in 12 museums and galleries in the UK,’⁷³ found that their approach too often resulted in what might be called ‘empowerment lite.’ It looked good but left community partners frustrated that its promise was not fulfilled. Rather than truly sharing power, museums had often engineered what Gaventa refers to as ‘false consensus’:

Challenge to the organisation’s plans was typically averted or subtly discouraged. Thus,

while an illusion of creative participation is on offer in such situations, decisions tend to be coerced, or rushed through on the basis of the organisation’s agenda or strategic plan, manipulating a group consensus of what is inevitable, usual or expected ... In this way, the organisations succeeded in exercising consensual power, convincing the participants that their interests are the same as those of the institution. Conflict and any form of difference in opinion – central to democratic dialogue – are effectively avoided.⁷⁴

This highlights a major risk to the success of people-centred approaches – perhaps ironically generated by risk-aversion on the part of the institutions adopting them.

Consensus is a complicated issue when it comes to people-centred approaches. It seems like a worthwhile goal and is particularly valued in some non-Western societies. Yet it is important that conflict is not simply ‘papered over’ in the interests of making life easy for the sponsoring organisation or its stakeholders. As Leila Jancovich, Associate Professor in Cultural Policy and Participation at the University of Leeds, comments:

You have to be willing to hear opposing voices, not just to find a consensus. People-centredness is not just about people being involved in decision-making but about new and different people being involved. The process can be very consensual but ultimately, it’s not people-centred unless it challenges power structures. And in order to do that, you have to find where the differences and disagreements are.⁷⁵

Similarly, Višnja Kisić, Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Sport and Tourism, Novi Sad, Serbia, argues that: ‘If participation should encourage the expression and negotiation of diverse meanings and interests, it is naive to think that this can happen without confrontations and polarisation.’⁷⁶

Human nature and human history appear to demonstrate that it is inherently challenging to give up or share power. It must be kept in mind that people-centred approaches can be threatening to powerholders in society – even

those who might appear to be in favour of them. As a review of an EU-funded project on participatory approaches in cultural heritage comments:

According to Arnstein, citizen participation is expected to enable the have-not citizens (the participants that have limited access to standard decision making in democratic regimes) to gain real power. Towards this aim, participatory practices should consider existing socioeconomic cleavages, as well as risks of manipulation led by the powerholders (the political and economic decision makers that promote citizen participation), which aim to reduce, or even prevent the effective redistribution of power to citizens.⁷⁷

John Gaventa highlights the need to challenge entrenched power dynamics if citizen engagement is to result in truly inclusive outcomes:

Around the world, new spaces and opportunities are emerging for citizen engagement in policy processes, from local to global levels ... Yet, despite the widespread rhetorical acceptance, it is also becoming clear that simply creating new institutional arrangements will not necessarily result in greater inclusion or pro-poor policy change. Rather, much depends on the nature of the power relations which surround and imbue these new, potentially more democratic, spaces ...

Transformative, fundamental change happens, I suggest, in those rare moments when social movements or social actors are able to work effectively across each of the dimensions [of power] simultaneously, i.e. when they are able to link the demands for opening previously closed spaces with people’s action in their own spaces; to span across local and global action, and to challenge visible, hidden and invisible power simultaneously.⁷⁸

One might go so far as to say that an approach should not be considered fully people-centred if it does not appear to be challenging existing power structures in some way.

69. Oswald et al, 2018, p 7

70. Cornwell, 2008, p 41

71. Cornwell, 2008, pp 26-27

72. von Lieres & Kahane, 2005, p 4

73. Lynch, 2011

74. Lynch, 2011, p 11

75. Interview with Leila Jancovich, 20th March 2020

76. Kisić, 2018, p 136

77. ROCK project, 2019, p 5

78. Singh, 2022

What level of engagement makes a difference?

In a complex project, involving funders and project partners and multiple stakeholders, people-centred approaches may be relevant at multiple levels of engagement. In a guidebook for participation in economic decision-making, Oswald *et al* identify a range of questions that funders should ask themselves about their work:

1. At the internal level: are programmatic processes participatory?
2. At the beneficiary level: do the organisations (grantees) funded to work with target audiences use participatory processes?
3. At the societal level: are there participatory processes within economic decision-making (e.g. government/investment decisions?) that programming can support?⁷⁹

Compared to traditional international development work, where decision-making lies with international charities, national agencies like USAID or DfID, or multinational agencies like WHO, UNICEF or the IMF, an approach that understands community needs through engagement and consultation with local community organisations and representatives may seem very people-centred indeed. Projects may be justifiably labelled as involving ‘co-creation’ and ‘human-centred design thinking’ without involving local communities at all – for example, a three-day USAID workshop that aimed to use these methods to reduce the number of children growing up outside of family care in Cambodia, which involved only human development professionals.⁸⁰

Meanwhile, Tony Butler of Derby Museums, argues that for cultural heritage institutions like museums, using asset-based community development methods is enough to qualify them as being people-centred in their approach. He argues that aiming for devolution of decision-making may not be appropriate for these institutions: ‘perhaps we’re not ready for the totally democratic deconstructed museum.’⁸¹

Does people-centredness increase sustainability?

People-centred approaches require a significant investment of time to involve participants; build trust, co-design outcomes and approaches; and navigate decision-making processes – but there is some evidence that they may also make projects and programmes more sustainable, in multiple senses. Because people-centred approaches build buy-in and ownership from local communities, many interviewees felt that this helped to increase their sustainability after project funding and/or impetus from an external organisation ceased. Increasing the agency and power of a local community was also seen as important in achieving sustainability.⁸² However, there may be issues around building desire for change in a community without making the structural shifts and having the long-term presence and funding necessary to deliver those changes. There is a danger that raising unfulfilled expectations about the efficacy of participation could have the effect of decreasing trust and willingness to participate in the future.⁸³ This is an important warning against tokenistic and/or short-term engagement which lacks clear and demonstrable impact.

The financial aspects of sustainability are complex. Mark Robinson feels that a large injection of money into a people-centred project can sometimes be an inhibitor: it distracts from the resources that communities already have, it creates a clear power dynamic between the ‘haves’ and the ‘have nots,’ and it can lead to a focus on what *can’t* be done when the money runs out.⁸⁴ However, Tony Butler, of Derby Museums in the UK, feels that their people-centred approach has improved their sustainability by ensuring that they are attuned to the needs and desires of their community – enabling much more aggressive fundraising.⁸⁵

Concerns have also been raised in the UK around austerity-driven devolution of responsibility from local governments in the name of community control and empowerment – expecting local communities to financially and organisationally sustain cultural heritage assets (libraries,



A project ideation session during the redevelopment of Derby Silk Mill.

Photograph © Chris Seddon Photography/Derby Museums

museums, historic buildings) that would previously have been supported by the government. Leila Jancovich warns that ‘people-centred approaches’ should not be used as an excuse for governments to place more strain on already overburdened communities. Asset transfer may be successful in wealthier areas, but in poorer areas she suggests that the expectation is unrealistic. Sustainability should instead be ensured through a lasting partnership between government and people.⁸⁶

The experiences of indigenous artists and communities in Australia are particularly pertinent in this regard. Cultural heritage is both a key driver of economic regeneration and tourism as well as an expression of individual identity and community solidarity in a political system that has been hostile to the interests of indigenous people and their rights. Cultural economist David Throsby notes that a pragmatic, networked ‘hybrid’ approach is

necessary to achieve inclusive growth through such complexity:

Working in these environments requires bridging diverse and often competing values, rationales, agendas and objectives that come from different sectors – family, community, market, government and the third sector. Enterprises and organisations that have understood and been able to accommodate this, such as ranger programs and art centres, have been able to function and thrive in these conditions. Their structures allow them to operate in the hybrid realm of the market within government funding requirements, while embracing community/families’ needs and diversity of the not-for-profit sector. There is an opportunity to acknowledge such working models and learn from their experiences. Hybrid enterprises and organisations operating in the

79. Oswald *et al*, 2018, p 2

80. <https://www.designthinkersgroup.us/4-years-of-co-creation-in-international-development/>

81. Interview with Tony Butler, 26th February 2020

82. Interview with Jenny Williams, 28th February 2020

83. Interview with Leila Jancovich, 20th March 2020

84. Interview with Mark Robinson, 4th March 2020

85. Interview with Tony Butler, 26th February 2020

86. Interview with Leila Jancovich, 20th March 2020

region are interconnected, such that activation of any of them may lead to increased activities in others.⁸⁷

Does people-centredness lead to inclusive growth?

One of the difficulties in beginning to unravel the relationship between people-centredness and inclusive growth is that many people-centred projects have not been explicitly aimed at inclusive growth. While they may include some outcomes that could be identified as contributing to inclusive growth, these are rarely presented within an inclusive growth framework. In addition to this, as the Welsh Assembly recognised in attempting to assess a programme that addressed poverty and social exclusion through the use of the arts, culture and heritage: ‘the long term nature of the impact on people’s lives means measuring outcomes can be expensive and attributing changes to specific interventions is very difficult.’⁸⁸

One review of inclusive growth argues that:

Empirically, there is little evidence to show that inclusive institutions are a prerequisite for inclusive growth. More significant is the ability of the state to enact policies that are growth enhancing and promote increases in productive employment. Practitioners should note the experience of China, which has significantly reduced absolute poverty without establishing what can be formally described as inclusive institutions.⁸⁹

However, there is some discussion in the literature about expected/intended outcomes from people-centred approaches to cultural heritage for inclusive growth. These are summarised in Table 6.

How do you know whether a particular project has been a success? Mark Robinson argues that a project should not be considered truly people-centred unless participants and other beneficiaries are also involved in its *evaluation*.⁹⁰ Who, after all, is better placed to determine whether something has had a positive impact on people than the

people themselves? He recommends the use of Most Significant Change, a participatory evaluation approach developed by Rick Davies for use in a rural development programme in Bangladesh. It is a narrative-based approach that empowers people in communities to gather personal stories about change; these are then analysed, filtered and discussed by stakeholders.⁹¹

In short, it is difficult to determine a direct causal relationship between people-centred approaches and how inclusive the growth generated by a cultural heritage or community project is. If we understand ‘inclusive’ in this context to mean simply benefitting the widest number of people possible, then it is impossible to state with any certainty that people-centredness is a requirement. If, on the other hand, inclusive means rather that a community decides for itself which compromises it is willing to make in the interests of growth and how resources should be shared and reinvested, the literature confirms the idea that people-centredness is an integral, essential dimension of inclusive growth.

Source	Outcomes
ICCROM, <i>People- Centred Approaches to the Conservation of Cultural Heritage: Living Heritage</i> (Court & Wijesuriya 2015)	Tourism is often cited as being the means by which heritage can provide economic benefits to communities, although it can bring both negative and positive impacts. Other broader benefits for community members should be considered, including: greater sense of ownership; stronger cultural identity; spirituality; increased employment opportunities; increased economic returns through heritage ‘added value’; contributions to sustainable development; more sustainable communities; increased cultural and social inclusion and intergenerational integration; more life-long learning experiences; more varied leisure opportunities; poverty alleviation and improved intercultural understanding.
<i>Advancing a Human Centred Approach to Development: Integrating Culture into the Global Development Agenda</i> (UNESCO 2012)	Respecting and supporting cultural expressions contribute to strengthening the social capital of a community and creates a sense of stewardship and trust in public institutions. Though inherently complex and difficult to quantify, investing in intercultural dialogue can help prevent conflicts, build peace, and protect the rights of marginalized groups, within and between nations, thus creating conditions for achieving development goals. By promoting understanding and reconciliation, intercultural dialogue transcends barriers, serving as a valuable lever countering ignorance, prejudice, and exclusion. In addition to fostering social cohesion, culture is an essential component of human development as it provides a sense of identity and is a source of creativity on both the individual and societal levels ... Culture in all its tangible and intangible dimensions constitutes a major resource for resilience in the face of disaster, owing to its strong symbolic value and because it incorporates traditional knowledge accumulated over centuries of adaptation to environmental conditions.
<i>No longer us and them: How to change into a participatory museum and gallery</i> (Bienkowski 2016)	Museums and galleries play an effective role in developing community skills, capabilities and creativity: preparing and helping people to be engaged in their communities, to articulate their voices, to find employment or volunteering opportunities in the heritage sector and elsewhere ...
National Trust for Historic Preservation, <i>Preservation for People: A Vision for the Future</i> (2017)	Older and historic places are used and reused to achieve the health benefits of stable neighborhoods, including walkability, as well as the stabilizing psychological benefits of belonging, continuity, identity, beauty, and memory. Older and historic places are used and reused to grow and sustain the economic vitality of communities. Social networks, businesses, cultures, and communities are nurtured as a critical aspect of preservation practice. People are not involuntarily displaced as a result of either rehabilitation or continued use and reuse of existing buildings and neighborhoods. Buildings are used and reused for their environmental benefits— including the conservation of land and habitat and combating climate change—and those benefits are widely understood. Historic sites and other places are increasingly centres of community life where people play, learn, and create and where hearts and minds are changed, healed, and inspired.

Table 6: Expected/intended outcomes from people-centred approaches to cultural heritage for inclusive growth

87. Throsby & Petetskaya, 2019
88. National Assembly for Wales, Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee, 2019, p 38
89. Alexander, 2015, p 2
90. Interview with Mark Robinson, 4th March 2020
91. A description and resources are available here: https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/plan/approach/most_significant_change

Current practice: the view from the field

The previous section dealt with the literature around people-centredness and therefore was largely concerned with the drivers and purpose of this approach and philosophy. The ‘why’ and the ‘what’, if you like, in the context of cultural heritage and inclusive growth. This section – based mainly on interviews – explores the ‘how’ from a practical, on-the-ground perspective, offering a snapshot from a wide range of cultural and development practitioners working at the forefront of people centred practice in 2020.

Crucially, our research included interviewing (or reading the commentary of) a high proportion of mediator-facilitators working for or leading organisations which have the express purpose of making interventions which manage, stimulate, empower or ‘compower’ communities.⁹² As such, our contributors are enablers as opposed to community activists taking power into their own hands. This is relevant because in Cultural Heritage for Inclusive Growth, the British Council is playing a similar interventionist role as a facilitator that is actively promoting people-centred approaches as a solution.

Our interviewees are in this sense ‘people centred professionals’ who have developed a range of skills, experience and leadership behaviours in this field. Most are self-declared champions of ‘citizen-led’ initiatives in the heritage and wider

cultural sector, although most work in both expert-led and participatory modes as a means towards a more or less realised citizen-led legacy. They are — in many cases self-consciously — designers. It is important to understand their views as ‘people-centred designers for hire’ who are mostly partisan and political, strongly in favour of radical people-centred change. In their separate ways, they are also leaders of change who in turn encourage, nurture or coach a next generation of leaders as an explicit aspect of their role.

The great majority of interviewees came from, and work in, the UK and Western Europe, although we also spoke to colleagues working in development in India and Latin America. There was a high degree of consensus among them, which may be a result of this commonality of background. The voices of the British Council commissioned practitioners working on the ground in Kenya, Columbia and Vietnam are missing from this report, and would have greatly enriched our understanding of people-centredness in non-Western societies.

A list of interviewees is given in the appendix. Not all gave their permission to be quoted and so we have for consistency left comments unattributed unless there is a major contextual reason for attribution and where we have asked for permission.

Process, power or values: what drives people-centred?

As discussed in the previous section, one of our interviewees, Hilary Jennings, argued that ‘people-centredness’ could be understood as composed of two elements: process and power. Most other interviewees signed up to the same interpretation, with most believing that process without the sharing of power was at best cosmetic; while power-sharing without process was unlikely to

yield best results. The combination of tested (or in some cases, improvised and emergent), expert-facilitated process combined with authentic, structural power/resource-sharing created conditions that ‘worked.’

Cultural consultant and commentator Mark Robinson argues that whatever the tangible

92. Fun Palaces founder Stella Duffy has used this term to move away from the still paternalistic notion of empowerment: <https://visionaryarts.org.uk/stella-duffy-heres-why-we-need-to-stop-empowering-people/>

benefits of people-centred approaches, there is an ethical imperative to pursue them for their own sake:

If you develop policies with people, that’s the right thing to do. Rather than developing policies that are applied to people. Even if it’s a right pain in the arse at times. Because if you think what’s the opposite of people centred? It’s a technocratic, top-down, equation-based system. That approach has all sorts of societal issues. The technocratic model tends to alienate people.⁹³

This being the case, a number of interviewees stressed the significance of practitioners’ personal values and their commitment to being people-centred:

Values and beliefs are the essentials; frameworks alone can be used superficially or to simply replicate/justify an institution’s current state and practice.⁹⁴

Some suggested that this was – bar none – the single most critical success factor that practitioners as individuals could bring to the table, with successful initiatives also requiring whole project teams, partnerships and supporting institutions to share these values as a pre-requisite – the necessary fertiliser for soil in which any human centred or asset-based process can thrive. People-centredness is an essentially distinctive process for co-creation and collective decision-making: coupled with and shaped by shared values relating to mutual respect and social justice.

What are the processes of people-centred?

Human-Centred Design

Simply put, human-centred design is an approach to creating products, services, experiences and spaces – anything in fact – based on a deep, empathetic understanding of the needs of the user. It employs the rapid development and testing of prototype concepts in overlapping phases rather than orderly steps.

Design can be driven by and include only experts or can involve users in some or all of the phases of the process. Human-centred design is a refined process for co-design with users and all sorts of stakeholders, ideally at all stages of the design process. It is grounded in the belief that the people who face the challenges are the ones who hold the key to their solution and, as such, it could be argued that it is inherently people-centred, although it does not necessarily imply that end-users have power or authority over the final design decisions.

Human-centred design methods have begun to be

used in international development work.⁹⁵ A number of cultural heritage organisations in the UK have also adopted the formalised processes of human-centred design to enable them to manage the often complex task of involving many people in the making and delivery of an experience, project or product. An interviewee, Nina Simon, writes in her influential book, *The Participatory Museum*:

How can cultural institutions use participatory techniques not just to give visitors a voice, but to develop experiences that are more valuable and compelling for everyone? This is not a question of intention or desire; it’s a question of design. Whether the goal is to promote dialogue or creative expression, shared learning or co-creative work, the design process starts with a simple question: which tool or technique will produce the desired participatory experience.⁹⁶

It is increasingly the preferred practice for inclusive heritage organisations. Derby Museums is one of the thought leaders in this space, having

93. Interview with Mark Robinson, 4th March 2020

94. Anonymous interviewee

95. Recently a six-year, £10.1m partnership between DFID and human-centred design firm IDEO.org tested its use in a range of pilot projects: ‘The focus on innovation and human-centred design (HCD) that is at the heart of Amplify responds to the ‘doing development differently’ agenda in aiming to ensure that the programme is focused on local problems, working closely with local people in an ongoing process, and is flexible and adaptive in its processes.’ However, the results were not recommended as a model for further work. See IPE Triple Line & A2B labs 2018, vii. For the use of human-centred design in international health, see also Holeman & Kane, 2019

96. Simon, 2010

created a Design Thinking Handbook that guides its practice both externally and internally. Human-centred design is more than functional process for the museum, it is the organising philosophy and sets the culture of the organisation.

While not all the practitioners interviewed recognised their practice as design – or as following the rigorous steps of human-centred design – numerous aspects of their practice might be clearly identified as such. Interviewees who regarded themselves as designers aligned three essential characteristics of the human-centred design process with people-centred practice:

- *Empathy*: a specific part of the process in which designers develop a deep and personal understanding of the issues affecting users or a community: ‘You have to meet people where they are, and stay focused on the challenges they have’;⁹⁷
- *Ideation*: the generation of ideas from a great diversity of sources – the more diverse and divergent the better, both for reasons of creativity and of inclusivity;
- *Prototyping*: in-field experimentation is key to testing the real-world value and fitness-for-purpose of those ideas. In human-centred design, this is done in a way that engages with users. Fox says that the ‘mindset of experimentation’ forms an essential pre-condition of people centred approaches.⁹⁸

Social design

While for some practitioners, human-centred design is, by its very nature, radical and people-centred, others suggest that it can still be an essentially expert-led process which exploits the input of users without actually handing over power and/or leading to real change. As one interviewee pointed out, Disney are human-centred design geniuses, while another argued that ‘co-design is a weasel word’ used to give people a false sense of ownership. This may be why social design is recognised by many as a separate discipline – one which may in fact better describe the framework our interviewees see themselves working within.

Social design, originally applied to social and

related services, employs design methodologies in order to tackle complex human issues, challenging social inequality as the priority. The designer is aware of their responsibility in society, and of the use of the design process to bring about social change and social justice. It often prioritises user groups and people who are marginalised, and its specific conventions may lend themselves to initiatives actively aiming to be citizen-led. Social design thinking, then, is a mechanism not just for involvement but power-sharing.

The Happy Museum is a UK movement adopting social design conventions to help museums and heritage organisations to become agents for sustainable change towards the holy trinity of environmental, social and personal wellbeing.

Asset-based community development

Activist practitioners among our interviewees – including Happy Museum, OF/BY/FOR ALL, G3, and Mark Robinson – align their work as cultural practitioners with community development, seeing it explicitly through the lens of asset-based community development.

Having strong associations and complementarity with human-centred design, asset-based community development is an idea that has been percolating into socially engaged cultural practice since its emergence in the late nineties.⁹⁹ The standard model of community development identifies needs or local deficits requiring fixes from outside the community. By contrast, asset-based community development focuses on the strengths within a community and its capacity to find its own solutions. Again, it has a strong ethical dimension which overtly tackles social injustice within the way community projects and services are designed, delivered and managed.

The principles of asset-based community development strongly align with the characteristics of people-centred approaches identified by interviewees, with almost all of them mentioning at least one of the five key principles of asset-based community development (there were also some striking disagreements, whose importance should not be minimised).

What does Co-production mean to you? (one word)

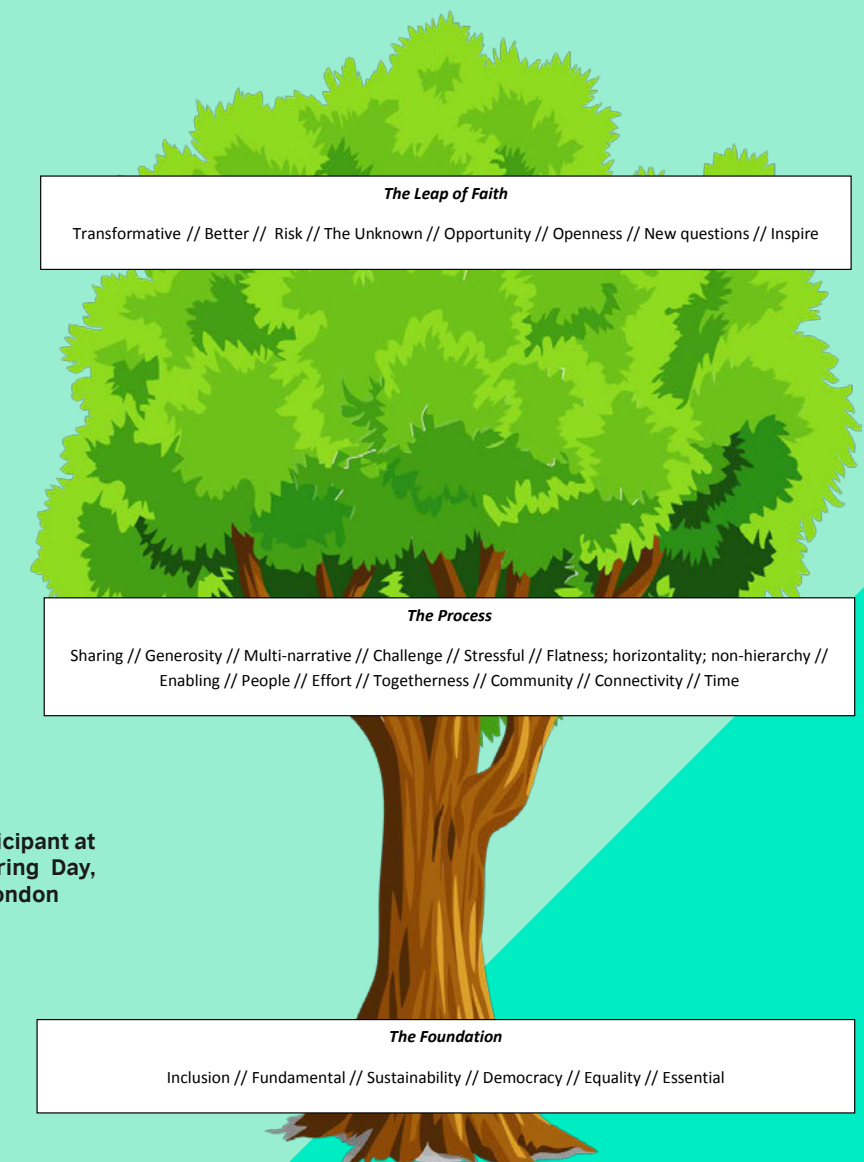


Image created by Beth Coverdale, participant at a Happy Museum Co-production Sharing Day, January 2019 at the Design Museum London

1. *Citizen-led*: citizens should be viewed as actors, rather than recipients, in development, with local community members, rather than institutions, in control. In fact, the responsibility of institutions is not just to serve the community but to create opportunities for community involvement, ‘to step back as soon as you can.’
2. *Asset-based*: in this context, this means recognising that everyone in a community has ‘assets’ to contribute, whether that be skills, time, ideas or opinions: ‘So you have to value the expertise in everyone, recognising that everyone brings different things.’ Although it was noticeable how many interviewees,

particularly those working on place-based programmes, still talked in deficit terms, seeing their role as addressing gaps in skills and confidence.

3. *Place-based*: the ‘community’ in asset-based community development is usually associated with very local, connected geographic areas. For some, hyper-locality was critical: ‘the city centre isn’t everyone’s space, even though it’s only a short journey away,’ commented one, with another observing that ‘the programme has been most successful when we start in very concentrated area – in one estate/group of streets – smaller than a parish.’ Interviewees

97. Anonymous interviewee

98. Interview with Hannah Fox

99. McKnight & Kretzmann, 1993

showed a great deal of consensus about the need for creative and cultural programmes to be relevant to place, ‘using local currency.’ We heard about an amazing array of projects inspired by and made distinctive because of local stories, traditions and history. As many observed, cultural projects have the potential to cut to the power of place in ways that other forms of community development cannot.

4. *Relationship-oriented*: people must be connected in order for sustainable community development to take place. Building out the connections between individuals, institutions and networks to forge a strong matrix is a key outcome. This in turn can affect policy, in a

virtuous circle: ‘Our job [in the Creative Civic Change programme] has been to join up across local, national and international scale, providing opportunities for communities to share their stories and have wider influence.’

5. *Inclusion-focused*: as one interviewee commented, ‘it’s not just about people being involved but about *different* people being involved.’ Another noted that ‘we have had to have a deeper conversation about which people – about those who have the greatest pain-points, about those left out, specific communities furthest from opportunity.’

Other aspects of people-centred process

Evidence and evaluation

Interviewees all underlined the importance of evidence of both the empathetic and qualitative variety, but also hard, quantitative data and, at best, a combination of both. A broad range of representative data combined with honest and rigorous evaluation are the antidote to assumptions. As one interviewee noted: without evidence, there is no experimentation and none of the iterative learning that people-centredness demands. We heard little of the ennui sometimes surrounding evaluation and a real appetite to get to the data which keeps ideas fresh.

Decision-making and governance

Some interviewees pointed out that the protocols and systems for decision-making and authority are all-important, certainly if the commitment to citizen-led approaches is authentic.

Interestingly, not everyone agreed, with some feeling that using a people-centred approach matters more in programme participation, and that people need not be drawn into the essentially bureaucratic aspects of programme management. Perhaps this differentiates between those who

read people-centred in the participation mode and those who define it as citizen-led as indicated in our model.

Flexibility and emergence

A common observation made of people-centred projects was that they are inherently improvised, sometimes appearing to re-create existing frameworks, but always needing to adapt to individual contexts and needs:

Participatory art is not a privileged political medium, nor a ready-made solution to a society of the spectacle, but is as uncertain and precarious as democracy itself; neither are legitimated in advance but need continually to be performed and tested in every specific context.¹⁰⁰

Particularly when projects, events or activities are grassroots, they may not be explicitly labelled as ‘people-centred’ or use formally codified methodologies. People-centredness can be an emergent property.

... many of the strategies that [Creative People and Places] places have developed would not be sourced from a textbook or resource around how to ‘do’ co-creation ... Rather, the multitude

of approaches are instinctive, and respond to each unique place, with each unique person or group.¹⁰¹

Open-ended outcomes

Flexibility is also key when it comes to considering outcomes. Discussing participatory art, François Matarasso argues that foreclosing decisions about the shape of a project can also foreclose the opportunity to be truly participatory:

Important decisions are often made before a project begins by funders, commissioners or local authorities. Aim, outcomes, ‘target’ group, location, art form, duration and more will have been agreed by the time potential participants hear about an opportunity, so the only real decision they may have is whether or not to take part. Such projects do not get far up Arnstein’s ladder.¹⁰²

Many interviewees felt likewise that programme design should not be wedded to particular outcomes – instead it should leave space for them to emerge iteratively.

It’s key that the goals for outcomes are not set, or fully set, in advance. Some models talk about

doing it the other way around. For me that’s involving people but it’s not people-centred because it starts with someone else’s goals.

Many interviewees felt working as far as possible towards goals set by the community was a lesson hard-won through experience.

Design thinking generally emphasises iteration rather than linear process, recognising that avoiding prejudging solutions is all-important to people-centredness:

It’s not just about the known problem space; with an open mind, you might actually discover different opportunities and problems.

In fact, it may be best to avoid thinking of culture as a solution at all:

There are several reasons why Fun Palaces has been such a success in such a short time but the most important is that it does not see itself as a solution to anything. Like all professionals, cultural managers put themselves at the centre of their ideas about society and its needs. Fun Palaces puts culture as the centre.

And because culture exists only for and because of people, that means people are at the centre.¹⁰³

Who leads people-centred work?

The ‘coordinator’

Interviewees talked eloquently and with real feeling about the role, outlook, qualities, skills and techniques used by what we could call programme leaders. The degree to which a programme is people-centred is, it seems, dependent on the form of leadership. We say ‘what we could call leaders’ because many people had problems with the term ‘leader’ – even when qualified through various interpretations of leadership – distributed, facilitative, multiplying etc. This may be modest, disingenuous, perceptive, or just drawing on different ideas of what leadership is. As one Creative People & Places director said:

We have a role of leadership in our community.

We are, of necessity, interested in local leadership models – our role is to hold things, come in with expertise and knowledge but to know when to leave well alone, or when to step back so that others come forward or take over ...

For the sake of accuracy and in respect of views, we will call this role that of the ‘coordinator’. Coordinators – often outsiders – are agents and catalysts for change, usually working from within an institution. Several people pointed out that a coordinator’s main responsibility was to ‘frame’ (a much-used term) a process in which a community could determine the outcomes, always being ready to hand over leadership and power to others.



Community members rehearsing with professional performers, 'Beyond the End of the Road' (November Club) (the "Works").

Photograph © Northern Heartlands

Our message is: we don't engage the community – we help you to, we don't want to create expert-dependency. So we're ready to let go from day one.

The 'mediator'

Interviews suggested that every programme also needs a mediator or connector – a person inside a community who can bridge others into the process.

You need a mediator ... this is self-evident. You can't do without it. Not necessarily a spirit guide, but someone working in the 'village'... Community leaders are hidden everywhere. They are the nodes of the network. The 'mavens,' the natural connectors.

Although co-ordinators may be mediators themselves, for the most part interviewees talked of the need to find good mediators with whom to develop a strong partnership:

You need to work with people who are willing to work in the same way, who are themselves

resilient, invested in their community but not 'gone native' so far that they don't listen to others ... A key question for me is how to empower the connector.

[Those in the co-ordinator role] are concerned about the community ... helping them to make their own decisions, trying to trigger the process, acting as a catalyst. But it should not be continued for long. The community itself needs to accept and own it. If they depend on the external force then it's not organically happening.

Various interviewees pointed out the need to manage the challenges of the 'usual suspects,' self-appointed spokespeople who can dog community projects, with a neutralising effect on wider participation, but who are nevertheless motivated to drive things forward.

You have to be wary of existing community leaders ... or you're not challenging power at all but there's also an arrogance in saying you can bypass them.

Values

Contributors commonly mentioned values such as generosity, openness and empathy, the need for self-awareness and humility. These values in turn inform key behaviours essential to the meaningful and successful execution of process: deep and unbiased listening; giving up control and stepping back at the right time; using a range of evidence to challenge assumptions; rigorous experimentation; the ability to manage change and shifting agendas; stakeholder management and stewardship. It is not surprising therefore, that practitioners favour values-driven processes as frameworks for their own practice.

Style and approach

One way or another, the style and approach of coordinators and mediators – those making things happen – were generally seen as 'mission critical' and a hallmark of people-centredness. It will be obvious by now that such facilitator-leaders need expansive capacity for empathy, generosity and openness. Interviewees felt that, more than in other roles, they needed a very high level of self-awareness and the knack of checking their own assumptions, opinions and privileges on an ongoing basis. This is important to anyone aiming for distributed leadership, but of particular importance for those working with vulnerable people, those lacking in confidence or experience of being heard.

There is no substitute for being open and listening to others and that makes self-awareness critical – the ability to recognise and challenge your own assumptions.

Interviewees pointed out that some leaders must fight their own 'fix-it' preferences:

I have had to learn the hard way – I'm a people pleaser so my instinct is to say: 'I'll do that for

you.' It's always a terrible idea – you end up taking away responsibility.

Nearly all noted that it takes experience, skill and self-control to 'let go' of projects for which you feel responsible:

You have to trust to give away power ... believing in others is like jumping off a cliff in the hope that you will fly, a self-fulfilling prophecy. This is something that individuals can do but institutions can't – so we need to lead others to the same place and a culture of trust.

This sensibility is essential in an experimental environment in which honest evaluation is make-or-break, and the ability to recognise and embrace failure is an essential part of a people-centred approach.

We learn from failure. Everything is partial – successful for some and not for others. Looking for success shuts out other voices.

Most interviewees talked of the crucial role of reflective practice, and the importance of seeing oneself in an equitable exchange:

Deliverers need an absolute belief that there is an exchange taking place, not just facilitator or project manager 'empowering the community.' They are building their own learning and capacity just as much.

Another theme was that people-centred leaders need, of necessity, to have a strong personal belief in social justice and a commitment beyond the professional to their work. As some said, managing one's own fervour at the same time as standing back to let others drive is one of the greatest challenges of the role.

What is the role of institutions?

Is people-centredness right for all?

One of the most complex questions we encountered in the course of the project was that of how – and how radically – organisations should pursue people-centred approaches.

Some interviewees argued that people-centredness was *always* the right approach, without exception, and with any issues around implementation being challenges rather than contraindications. Others took a somewhat less

radical stance on this question, saying that co-design might not always be an essential part of people-centredness:

I do wonder sometimes whether co-design is right for all circumstances ... sometimes people are so tired they just want stuff to be done for them ... they trust us to make judgements for them after going through the structured process the first time. We need to be mindful of what else is on people's plates – what other work or responsibilities or stress.

Some went so far as to argue that people-centred approaches are not right for all cultural heritage organisations – that some institutions may not be able to support the particular organisational culture and outlook that it takes to enable people-centredness to thrive. They shared concerns about the authenticity and value of people-centred programmes run as satellite activities by organisations who were not in themselves recognisably people-centred.

Even if one believes that all institutions *ought* to take a people-centred approach, it might be unreasonable to expect those that are new to people-centred work to jump immediately to a radical decentralisation of power and decision-making. Evidence from the Creative People and Places programme in the UK demonstrates that organisations can shuttle between all three of the modes we indicate in the model, creating a journey towards an activist legacy.

Several interviewees questioned how easily an institution like the British Council, with its complex structures and hierarchies and historically colonial connections, could adopt and champion people-centred approaches. However, they were supportive of the bold ambition and offered up examples of organisations who had recently undergone a transformation from traditional to more people-centred. Most provocatively, two interviewees wondered if CH4IG could present an opportunity to 'decolonise' the British Council.

Internal people-centredness

People-centred organisations include and involve staff and other stakeholders in much the same way they do users. An organisational mindset of openness to ideas and input from all, combined

with distributed leadership, must of course extend the same respect and interest towards its staff. Organisations – their leadership, systems and processes – need to make a virtue of a multiplicity of divergent perspectives and views.

If there is a problem in the institution, then it stagnates. It needs to be open to accept criticism and change. It needs to experiment to evolve.

This leads to certain organisational behaviours, such as working in solution-focused multidisciplinary teams; mechanisms for encouraging and enabling good ideas and lateral thinking; and a high level of devolution. The key thing is that being people-centred needs to inform 'the way we do things around here' – all the time, through the central organising principles of an organisation. We heard many examples of this, including Derby Museums' Design Handbook, Yerba Buena Centre's staff forum and Turner Contemporary's Appreciative Enquiry mechanism, to name a few.

Commitment to social change

There was a good deal of consensus that organisations working in a people-centred way were automatically civic players, at the centre of a matrix of local relationships – an essential in the context of inclusive growth.

When I arrived, there was a very 'institutional' organisation with all the standard teams. I tried to put community at the centre and then think about how a museum fits within that context ... It was then much easier to think about the people structure ... I was looking for more of an outcome focus – for the community.

More importantly, however, organisations needed a mission-linked commitment to social change to succeed at being people-centred.

This is political work. Don't give up on it. But this means organisations need to be transparent, in their values and intent, interests. This is real politics.

Without this commitment, people-centredness became cosmetic window-dressing.

Conclusions: the people-centred scale

Our interviews with practitioners and specialists in the field have confirmed the importance of a coherent people-centred skillset and mindset. There is a strong consensus that to use people-centred approaches in practice you need both the right principles and the right process. Individual practitioners need to cultivate the right mindset, leadership approach and framing, while institutions need to nurture them by establishing a culture of openness and stewardship that fosters a willingness to share or give up power.

The model below summarises our findings by plotting behaviours and philosophies on a simplified people-centred scale.

In the 'expert-led' category, institutions, organising agents or authorities show few or no (some would say only tokenistic) people-centred characteristics. This represents the standard control, the traditional, top-down outlook and practice which is still the default of most cultural institutions and funders. This is not to say that 'expert-led' institutions or projects are completely without genuinely well-intentioned and successful activity which is accessible, sensitive to need and intended to have people-centred outcomes, simply that the level of shared power, decision-making and co-creation is low. Some expert-led institutions may offer a sound platform for projects which display more people-centred characteristics.

We have identified an intermediate category termed 'consultative/participatory,' in which agents seek to engage and involve people in co-creating programmes they have initiated through processes they have designed. These processes are specialist and require professional skill and are best nurtured within an appropriate institutional culture/mindset. Agents may retain the final power of decision-making even if they have consulted users and participants extensively throughout. As we have seen, many practitioners working in this way see themselves as making a pathway towards, or opening up, a new space for the final category: 'citizen-led.'

'Citizen-led' people-centredness is, by its nature, radical, as it challenges existing norms and power structures. It is not 'organised' by any external agent but is instigated from within a community who find means to self-organise and determine

their own purpose and process – sometimes more akin to a movement than an organisation.

In one sense then, institutions and organisations can only strive towards the upper rungs of the ladder. We came across few cultural heritage programmes which were purely citizen-led. As noted, an initiative or organisation may have an intention to become citizen-led but be starting from an expert-led mode with the intention of moving – often iteratively and supportively – towards a more participatory and/or citizen-led future.

Where possible, we have attempted to map our model of people-centredness onto the 'Key Principles' that have guided the Cultural Heritage for Inclusive Growth programme, as we felt it would be useful to make the connection explicit. A codified understanding of people-centred approaches could be a way of delivering on these Principles practically in the field, a framework for capturing shared learning from the action research programme.

Expert-led (Not (yet) people-centred)	Consultative/participatory (Somewhat people-centred)	Citizen-led (Radically people-centred)
Inclusive		
Cultural heritage for its own sake, with institutional and curatorial aims	Efforts made to ensure accessibility, but with a focus on tourists and others who can afford to pay	Cultural heritage for all and/or just for communities to whom it belongs
Participatory		
Engaging with governments, funders, national organisations and 'experts'	Also engaging with local community organisations and community representatives	Also engaging with people
Paternalism (decisions made by institutions)	Consultation (decisions made by institutions through a consultative process)	Citizen control (decisions made by citizens themselves)
Projects delivered by domain specialists - participation an aspiration	Projects delivered by 'people- centred specialists'	Projects delivered by people/citizens
Far-reaching		
Limited social agenda	Social change	Social justice
Sustainable		
Initiated and sustained externally	Initiated externally but developing ownership within the community	Initiated and sustained within the community
Building capacity		
Addressing perceived deficits within the community	Meeting 'different and diverse' needs	Building on and developing assets already present within the community
Locally-led and responsive		
Outcomes predetermined	Communities consulted on outcomes, with a culture of experimentation	Communities decide on outcomes
Developing policy		
Reinforcing existing power structures	Working within existing power structures to consider the needs and desires of those who have less power	Challenging existing power structures
Mutual learning		
Measures of success determined by – and lessons learned by – agents rather than beneficiaries	Learning and reflection built into process, using frameworks such as Story of Change which involve users in measuring success	Beneficiaries set success criteria, using frameworks such as SROI/Most Significant Change

Table 7: Model of people-centredness mapped against the Key Principles of the Cultural Heritage for Inclusive Growth programme

Conclusions

There is a clear historical context and a current practical framework for people-centred approaches both in cultural heritage and beyond. Its underpinning concepts are well established, properly critiqued by the academy and recognised by practitioners (across the cultural heritage and international development sectors) in their work on the ground.

There is a high, although not complete, degree of consensus about its core principles and processes. However, the term ‘people-centred’ is a loose one. It is not always used explicitly. When it is used, it can be understood to encompass a range of practices and activism, from institutions aiming to meet the perceived needs of their communities; to institutions aiming to be inclusive in engaging with their communities; to citizen-led movements.

As we have noted, there is no rigorous evidence available on whether or not people-centred approaches increase either growth or its degree of inclusiveness (equality, inclusivity and sustainability). Given the fuzziness of both ‘people-centredness’ and ‘inclusive growth’ as concepts, it is difficult to imagine a satisfactory control-based trial. Alongside many of our interviewees, however, we would argue that ‘inclusive’ means more than just ‘as many and as diverse as possible.’ It aspires to a situation where all members of a community get to participate fully in deciding for themselves what their cultural heritage is, how it should be advanced and promoted, and to what ends and with what benefits. This being the case, there cannot be inclusive growth without the authentic and well-executed application of people-centred principles and process.

If ‘citizen-led’ is the gold-standard of application, we have to accept that the role of institutions (however well-intentioned), organisations (however grassroots and connected), facilitators (however sensitive and politically aligned) is to ‘let go’, expertly, before that point – and/or to reimagine their role as one of supporting existing citizen movements. In other words, their role is to pave the way for a citizen-led future.

people-centred practice: being expert in framing, coaching, holding all the possibilities and the divergent thinking at once, encouraging self-awareness and learning and knowing definitively when it is time to step back. We were told that this requires skills, principles, experience but most of all – empathy. This suggests you cannot be taught people-centred approaches – but you can learn them. It is not surprising then that this is easier for individuals and harder for institutions. Any institution that genuinely aims to become people-centred needs first to become a learning organisation with all the attendant challenges.

The British Council projects all seem to be well advanced on that learning journey, although it would be very interesting to talk to individuals to find out where they feel they are and what they have gathered along the way. Their circumstances, traditions and conventions – personal, societal and institutional – are clearly having a profound impact, and these stories are contributing rich and important learning.

This would seem to represent best professional

Appendix 1: tools, sources & resources

Creator	Field	Description
Service Design Tools	Service design	A range of service design tools ¹⁰⁴
IDEO.ORG	Service design	Human Centred Design: 'We use human-centred design to create products, services, and experiences that improve the lives of people living in poverty.' ¹⁰⁵
NLHF	Heritage	'This guidance will help you address our inclusion priority in your project ... Every project we fund must achieve our outcome 'a wider range of people will be involved with heritage'. This is our inclusion outcome. It is mandatory because we want all of our grants to contribute to a society where everyone has the opportunity to take part in and benefit from heritage.' ¹⁰⁶
Derby Museums	Heritage, service design	Human-centred design handbook ¹⁰⁷
Chrissie Tiller	Arts	A think piece 'to unpack and explicate the varied forms of shared decision-making and collaborative practices, using examples and tools developed across [Creative People and Places].'
Moritz von Rappard	Service design	A method inspired by design thinking for work in diverse groups, 'for all people who deal with cultural institutions or projects and who would like to develop concrete answers to specific questions.' ¹⁰⁸
Oxfam	Development	Quick guide to power analysis ¹⁰⁹
Carnegie UK Trust	Social justice	'This report is based on the findings of a UK project designed to support civil society to analyse power and, as a result, take action for social change. It describes how strategies for change can be strengthened when organisations and their communities have a better understanding of their own power and what they can achieve.' ¹¹⁰
Hari Srinivas/GDRC	Heritage	'Heritage and Conservation Strategies: Understanding the Justifications and Implications' ¹¹¹
Mark Robinson	Culture	'53 elements of CPP leadership practice [at its best].' ¹¹²

104. <https://servicedesigntools.org/tools>
105. <https://www.ideo.org/tools>
106. <https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/publications/inclusion>
107. <https://www.derbymuseumsfromhome.com/hcd-handbook>
108. <http://www.stiftung-genshagen.de/gsup3sup-methode.html>
109. <https://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/quick-guide-to-power-analysis-313950>
110. <https://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/publications/power-and-making-change-happen/>
111. <http://www.gdrc.org/heritage/heritage-strategies.html>
112. https://www.culturehive.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/0750-CPP_Multiplying-Leadership_FINAL.pdf

Nesta	Futures	'... there are many tools available which can make it easier to forge a consensus on actions now that may have a big impact in the long-run. These many methods mobilise far larger numbers of people in thinking about the future – rather than relying just on professionals and experts.' ¹¹³
frog	Development, Service Design	Collective Action Toolkit ¹¹⁴
ABCD Institute	Asset Based Community Development	The Asset-Based Community Development approach has a set of principles which act like a compass, not a map. ABCD Institute, offering a range of tools and resources includes ABCD in Action, an international online community ¹¹⁵
Design Council	Service Design	Design methods for developing services ¹¹⁶
Institute of Development Studies	International Development	A collection of resources for participatory methods ¹¹⁷

113. <https://www.nesta.org.uk/report/our-futures-people-people/>
114. <https://www.frogdesign.com/work/frog-collective-action-toolkit>
115. <https://abcdinaction.org/>; <https://www.nurtureddevelopment.org/blog/asset-based-community-development-5-core-principles/>
116. <https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/our-work/skills-learning/resources/design-methods-developing-services/>
117. <https://www.participatorymethods.org/resources>

Appendix 2: interviewees

Name (Role)	Organisation	To Note	Country
Interviewees			
Grace Bremner Project Director	Creative Civic Change - Gulbenkian Foundation supported community development programme ¹¹⁸		UK
Tony Butler Director Museums	Derby Museums - dedicated to 'creating the conditions for well-being (helping people connect with others, keep learning, take notice of the world and give back to the community)'		UK
Jill Cole Director	Northern Heartlands - Great Place Scheme (NLHF funded) ¹¹⁹		UK
Helen Connify	Sunderland Culture - local authority led programme ¹²⁰		UK
Mahua Choudhury Project Co- Ordinator/ Deputy CEO	Bihar Rural Livelihoods Promotion Society, JEEViKA State of Bihar Capacity Building Program	Manages a massive creative regen programme for 9 million women	India
Deborah Cullinan Director	Yerba Buena Centre – Extraordinary arts centres promoting creative and social change in San Francisco		USA
Hannah Fox Director Projects and Programmes	Derby Museums	Developing a new leadership programme based on HCD principles	UK
Alessandra Gariboldi Head of Research	Fondazione Fitzcarraldo Major research institute, leading many Creative Europe R&D projects. Includes Adeste project, first Creative Europe funded projects focuses on capacity building in engagement practice ¹²¹	Published on audience development and community engagement in museums	Italy
Jo Hunter	64 Million Artists – Running projects that put Cultural Democracy into practice ¹²²		UK

118. <https://localtrust.org.uk/other-programmes/creative-civic-change/about-creative-civic-change>
119. <https://northernheartlands.org/>
120. <https://sunderlandculture.org.uk/>
121. <https://www.fitzcarraldo.it/homepage.html>; <https://www.adeplus.eu/>
122. <https://64millionartists.com/>

Leila Jancovich Associate Professor in Cultural Policy and Participation	University of Leeds ¹²³	Publishes on cultural democracy participation, power and decision making in the arts	UK
Hilary Jennings Project Director	The Happy Museum – supporting museums to create more resilient people, places and planet ¹²⁴		UK
Mark Robinson Consultant	Thinking Practice ¹²⁵	Widely published on socially engaged arts	UK
Nina Simon CEO	OF/BY/FOR ALL ¹²⁶ – provides digital tools to help public institutions matter more to more people	Author of the influential <i>Participatory Museum and The Art of Relevance</i>	USA
Oluwaseun Soyemi Project lead	National Lottery Heritage Fund Great Place Scheme ¹²⁷		UK
Duncan Sones	Freelance culture/international development consultant	Specialist in international relations	UK
Josie Stone Director	Peterborough Presents Creative People & Places ¹²⁸		UK
Moritz von Rappard	Genshagen Foundation – influential foundation supporting culture and learning	Community Arts practitioner and activist. Recently published a human centred design manual	Germany
Jenny Williams Director	Revolution Arts, Creative People & Places ¹³⁰		UK
For the British Council			
Nikki Locke	Cultural Heritage for Inclusive Growth Programme Manager		UK
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