Arts, Culture and Development – The Tricky Balancing Act

A thought piece written by The Change Collective,
commissioned by the British Council

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Foreword

This thought piece has been commissioned by the British Council, to explore the links between UK arts and international development from a practitioner's point of view. Recognising that there is an ongoing shift in both these sectors - from more traditional ways of presenting artistic practice or delivering development, to a more participatory and inclusive way of working – the British Council is currently exploring where the connections and synergies lie, and how we can make a contribution through a cultural relations approach to development.

As part of our arts for social change strategy, we look for ways to value the role of arts and culture to:

- extend safe spaces for culture, creative exploration and exchange;
- enable dialogue and present marginalised voices;
- support the protection of cultural heritage and expression of cultural identities.

We believe that by bringing the socially engaged arts and international development sectors closer together, we can effect positive change in the countries that we work in. This in turn will contribute to creating more secure, prosperous and stable societies worldwide, through building trust and understanding between peoples and cultures from the UK and abroad.

This paper sets out the changing landscape in the arts and development sectors and presents ways in which large-scale organisations can find new ways of working to shift the balance towards a more flexible, mutual and sustainable model. It complements a recent Culture and Development literature review that has been completed by JP Singh, Institute of Intercultural Relations, for the British Council. It also follows on from the Uncommon Ground Symposium on socially-engaged arts, held in the UK in March 2018.

The British Council has commissioned The Change Collective for this piece of work, as they have extensive experience of working in the UK and internationally in a creative and collaborative way, with people from diverse backgrounds and contexts. They are also familiar with the British Council, particularly the work of Culture and Development and the Active Citizens global programme.

We hope that this thought piece serves as a starting point for further discussions and collaboration with the arts and development sectors, both in the UK and internationally.

Rosanna Lewis and Joanne Slack

Culture and Development, British Council

The Change Collective

Introduction

We would like to acknowledge the valuable contributions of Dan Boyden, Daniel Smith and Chloe Osborne of The Change Collective and James Edleston of Create Adapt in formulating this thought piece, with the support of Lorna McGinty and Delyth Taylor from The Change Collective in the early research and development phase.

In 2008, theatre practitioner Noel Greig wrote that *'we have evolved our protective shields to the point where our capacity for mutual distrust has led us into the dangerous territory of mutual destruction'[1]*. In an increasingly uncertain world, The Change Collective (TCC) explores new ways of using the arts and creative processes to address complex social issues.

The Change Collective has extensive experience designing and delivering arts-based programmes with communities and organisations in the UK and Internationally. We have experienced how the arts has the potential to catalyse social change in different spaces around the world. Through a series of collaborative projects and commissions, we are exploring this potential in more depth and learning about ourselves and our work in the process. As artists and change-agents we are interested in how change happens and the value of an arts-based approach.

www.thechangecollective.com

The intention of this thought piece is to provoke further conversation and collaboration between the arts and development sectors. We want to explore what happens at the intersection and hope to provide insights in response to the following questions:

- Where are the opportunities for mutual collaboration and learning between arts and development?[2]
- How can socially engaged arts practice contribute to positive social and economic development in the UK and internationally?
- How might existing or emerging arts strategies and approaches support the development sector to work effectively with complex issues?
- What kinds of conversations are needed to move our thinking and practice forward, and who should we be listening to?

This piece is rooted in what's happening now, drawing on The Change Collective's experience as creative practitioners delivering arts for social change in the UK and internationally. Primarily, this piece is addressed to a UK audience but we will also explore what is happening further afield to show how this work can be applied in an international context. We will reflect on current trends in the arts and development sectors, exploring the potential impact of these changes as well as emerging opportunities to support effective cross-sector working. We will also identify a range of strategies which can be applied by organisations to capitalise on the increasing encounter and overlap of the arts and development.

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[1] *www.amazon.co.uk/Young-People-New-Theatre-Intercultural/dp/0415452511*
[2] *Whilst the notion that arts and development are clearly distinct sectors doesn't accurately reflect an increasingly connected landscape, we have chosen to apply a sectoral lens in recognition that this lens continues to influence the policy and practice of many of the organization we work with.*

In today's world, communities are more connected and interdependent than ever before. Politically, culturally, economically and technologically our local experience is intertwined with others globally, in a shifting web of relationships. Living in a connected world can bring opportunities such as new relationships, ideas and cooperation with other cultures. It can also bring challenges such as;

- Rapid and unpredictable change as decisions taken locally ripple in unexpected ways affecting communities thousands of miles away.
- A sense from communities and cultures that they are losing control over local affairs; the sense that change is increasingly happening *to* and not *with* them.
- The attempt to divide or polarise communities, as fear and mistrust become a popular political response to living in a highly connected and uncertain world.[3]

This analysis of the current social and political context is informed in part by Systems and Complexity Theory. It's based on a set of assumptions which don't capture the full story, nevertheless, we feel it provides relevant insights into why the arts and cultural relations have a powerful role to play in an increasingly inter-connected world; insights which can be applied across different sectoral and geographical boundaries[4]. Before reflecting in more detail on current development and arts practices, it's important to take into account some of the social and political issues we're currently faced with in the UK and how many of the issues are closely related to living in an increasingly connected world.

What are some of the current social issues we are faced with in the UK today?

- The decline of traditional industries in a global market has resulted in economic uncertainty and an emphasis on a mobile and agile workforce able to adapt and respond to the needs of the global market. This has contributed to: shifting values, shifting communities, migration, urbanisation, precarious livelihoods and capital driven development.
- The global economic crisis has contributed to cuts and austerity – increased levels of poverty and inequality, housing crisis, disenfranchisement, isolation.
- Uncertainty and the sense that we are losing control.[5] In an inter-connected world change happens in unpredictable ways. Small changes can quickly ripple and affect others thousands of miles away. This leads to an increased sense of uncertainty and undermines people's faith in the ability of decision-makers to take control. (The sense of 'loss of power' to 'the other' has contributed to the current 'Brexit' social and political divide.)

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[3] *An alternative political response has been the promotion of strong relationships across diversity as vital to the success and survival of communities.*

[4] *Complexity Theory is often perceived as being trans-ciplinary (see Complexity Theory and Conflict Transformation: An Exploration of Potential and Implications, Diane Hendrick, 2009) Where previously images of boundary formation and maintenance were common, with knowledge fragmented into isolated fields that would develop in a linear way and where expertise, mastery and control were keywords, there is now the emergence of notions of boundary crossing and blurring (Klein, 2004)*

[5] *Network Theory indicates that increasing connectivity in a system increases the opportunities for exchange of information as well as for a system to change and develop. At the same time connections are a source of perturbation, so the more connections there are, the more unstable and uncertain the system will be.*

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- Social media and the always connected, always self-aware, information overload is impacting on self-care and emotional wellbeing.

In an increasingly connected world uncertainty is the new norm. Social systems like stock markets, societies and schools are constantly in flux and hidden forces seem to frustrate any effort to bring things under control. So how should society respond? What is the role of cultural relations, arts and civil society in formulating this response?

What are the current trends in the arts and development sectors?

The Development Sector

Over the last 30 years or so there has been a slow but potentially radical change in the way international development is conceived and delivered. Part of this change has been the move away from large-scale interventions designed in global headquarters and delivered to 'Third World' countries, towards smaller, locally designed and delivered initiatives, built on participation and empowerment. Participatory development has been about moving from institution-led, instrumental projects to more community-led, empowering processes; from ends, to means and ends. Or put another way, from product to process and product.

Another part of the change has been the recognition of the deeply complex nature of society and its issues. Social issues are no longer perceived as predictable, mechanical faults that can be fixed - like a clock - through calling in the experts. They are instead seen as ever-changing, always different and highly connected to other parts of the system. Often the capacity to address a problem sits with multiple actors, and the analysis of the problem and the intended outcomes of those actors, is usually not aligned. Despite this imperative to collaborate across difference, we continue to operate in a world where large institutions dominate and accountability is primarily to large scale funders and the market. Traditional funding and performance management regimes limit the ability of organisations to respond to real problems, and competition for media and public attention encourage stories which lean towards a false simplicity – it sounds good on twitter but is it real?

Some of the key challenges now facing larger organisations include:

- How best to nurture locally owned initiatives that address the complex nature of the problem, whilst maintaining strategic coherence and accountability across communities and the organisation as a whole?
- How to balance commercial pressures to scale up and package best practice approaches, whilst being true to the value of local ownership and honest about the nature of the work?
- How can we work effectively across boundaries (for example, sectoral, cultural, political) to take on social issues whilst at the same time nurturing the huge diversity of approaches and cultures that exist? Acknowledging that this diversity is, in itself, a strength.

We're currently experiencing a move away from distinct sectors each with a specific societal role, to a more dynamic, fluid set of relationships connecting across traditional boundaries. This change in mindset has become visible through the recent transformation in strategic thinking and the internal structures of organizations and institutions – reflecting the need to be congruent internally with the shifts we are seeking to achieve externally.

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Doing Development Differently:

Doing Development Differently (DDD)[6] is an influential new movement which is advocating for change in community and international development and wider civic engagement. The movement is backed by academics, donors and multi-laterals (DfID, World Bank, UNICEF, OECD) as well as innovation hubs around the world. At its core is the process of iteration, learning and adaptation. Here are some of the key principles:

- Recognise that development is complex and ever changing.
- Be self-aware: recognise the underlying assumptions of the intervention and those intervening. Test, challenge and hold your assumptions lightly.
- Focus on solving local problems that are debated, defined and refined by local people in an ongoing process which is legitimised at all levels (political, managerial and social), building ownership and momentum throughout.
- Work through local conveners who mobilise those with a stake in progress to tackle common problems and introduce relevant change.
- Work with the existing conditions. Look for patterns and insights into what's already working and explore how to create the environment in which positive change could emerge.
- Have a strong purpose and values whilst maintaining a flexible strategy
- Experiment and manage risks by making 'small bets': trying things out, analysing the impact across systems, pursuing activities with promise whilst dropping others.
- Blend design and implementation through rapid cycles of innovation, planning, action, reflection and revision (drawing on local knowledge, feedback and support) to enable an on-going process of success and failure.
- Apply a variety of different lenses looking at what different perspectives can offer; arts, science and technology, behavioural science, economics theory.

Doing Development Differently is an example of an important emerging trend in the development sector. In the context of this thought piece it's an important indicator and we will explore how current arts practice can add value to this and other trends in both mindset and approach.

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[6] *www.doingdevelopmentdifferently.com/the-ddd-manifesto*

The Arts Sector

'We believe in the genius in everyone, in everyone an artist and everyone a scientist, and that creativity in community can change the world for the better. We believe we can do this together, locally, with radical fun' - Fun Palaces' co-founder Stella Duffy [7]

The arts and an applied artistic practice has often focused on and experimented with;

- Questioning dominant narratives or assumptions.
- Co-authoring new stories and identities.
- Cultivating collaboration across disciplines, sectors and difference.
- Experimenting with creative responses to specific spaces, people and contexts, enabling learning through different mediums.
- Bringing together diverse perspectives and allowing multiple meanings to coexist - challenging the tendency to frame things as black or white, right or wrong.
- Cultivating and holding uncertainty both in the artistic process and through the way in which art is re-discovered and re-imagined by different audiences. This adaptive capacity to work with diversity and change reflects the contemporary interest in remaining agile and open-sourced.
- Creating a safe space to take risks and explore difficult issues. The arts can be a powerful way of exploring sensitive issues in communities that might challenge existing narratives and power dynamics.

As we've outlined so far, there appears to be a shift in certain parts of the development sector towards a more agile approach and there is a demand for something new. Organisations are looking to better understand how to build effective relationships across the traditional silos and to create the conditions for locally-led initiatives with local ownership and long-term engagement. We're seeing organisations that are embedding, both internally and externally, the ongoing process of *iteration, learning and adaptation*. We will now look at the arts sector in the UK, at a time when we're also witnessing, in certain areas, an interesting paradigm shift. We will explore the opportunities for cultural relations organisations like the British Council, whilst also acknowledging some of the tensions that will need to be unpacked.

How we try to define 'the arts' and who has access to it is an interesting area to explore in the context of arts and development. In Brazil for example, the arts and creativity are everywhere; dance and carnival are the beating heart of the country, however there's still a massive separation between this activity and the consumption of art produced by professionals[8]. The principle that the arts and culture should not only be available to everyone but have the potential to actively improve peoples' lives and wellbeing isn't new, it's been deeply embedded in artistic practice around the world for generations; protest in Egypt, healing in post-conflict Sri Lanka and livelihoods in India; art has been contributing to the wellbeing and development of our communities in many different ways for years.

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[7] *www.civicroleartsinquiry.gulbenkian.org.uk/resources/fun-palaces*
[8] Ref to an innovative scheme introduced by Gilberto Gil during his time as Brazil's culture minister; '*The Pontos de Cultura have provided the means through which the multiple voices of a diverse nation can find expression in music, literature, poetry'*

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For many, the role of arts and culture and how people engage with it in the UK, is changing. Individuals and organisations are challenging the traditional notion of 'high-arts' that is produced for, and consumed by, those that can afford it. The libraries, theatres, galleries and museums are of course still an important part of the fabric of our streets, towns and cities, but these often publicly funded buildings and spaces can feel inaccessible, alien or out of reach to many. David Jubb, Director of Battersea Arts Centre said at a recent British Council and Arts Council England conference on socially engaged arts, that for many *'art is something they enjoy with a glass of wine at 7.30pm at the end of a long day at the office'.* Whilst this may still be the case for many and this thought piece isn't looking to discredit that, within the last few years a growing body of research around art and culture in the UK has argued for a space to look at a number of key questions; Who is it for? Where do we see it? Who has access to it? What is the relationship between '*creativity, arts and the creative industries',* [9]Funders such as The Gulbenkian Foundation are investing considerable time and resources into exploring the role arts can and should play in civil society at a time when others are others are increasingly seeing the value of an art-based approach.[10]

What we're currently seeing in the UK is the transition of 'applied arts' from the fringes to the mainstream. Work that has been happening in the back rooms of community centres by overworked arts practitioners and participation workers for decades, is becoming embedded in large scale UK arts organisations' main programming. There seems to be something interesting happening in how we value participatory or 'community' arts. The stigma is being challenged and the identity redefined. It's also not just 'applied arts' or 'applied artists' that are contributing to social change; the range of artists and artistic practice – studio based, performance, site-specific, visual arts – that now hold social change as a motive, explicitly or not, seems also to be more visible. The recent report from The Gulbenkian Foundation acknowledges that *'changes in public expectations of the arts, in patterns of consumption and participation, point to an urgent need for arts organisations to re-imagine or re-invigorate their civic role. This requires arts organisations to reflect deeply on how they engage with the public, their local community, or a community of interest. They need to think about how they work with and for them, and how they respond to communities' concerns, interests and needs'*

We're increasingly seeing work that is more inclusive and participatory. We're seeing more models of co-creation, shared local ownership and decision making, alongside the re-emergence of art within a political context that is driven by the need to explore some of the deeply troubling and interconnected social challenges we're currently faced with[11]. In September 2018 we saw the launch of the 'Co-Creating Change'[12] network supported by Arts Council England, Paul Hamlyn Foundation and The Gulbenkian Foundation. This three-year funded network speaks to a shift in the UK arts sector towards valuing 'process and methodology' as much as 'product and artistic output'. In the same speech as quoted above, David Jubb from Battersea Arts Centre recognises that '*as a whole, the wider arts sector, focuses on product. The distribution of a thing for people to consume. Simplistic debates about the measurement of knowledge are prioritised – over more complex discussions about pedagogy or process.*

[9] *Towards cultural democracy Promoting cultural capabilities for everyone, 2017, kcl.ac.uk/culture*

[10] *www.64millionartists.com/our-work/arts-council-england*

[11] *Chol Theatre based in Huddersfield and London based Museum of Homelessness are both good examples of this.*

[12] *Co-Creating Change Network, BAC 2018*

It is striking – that for a group of people who work with human imagination and relationships – that our commissioning models, our distribution models and our funding models owe more to manufacturing than to the creative process. We've got stuck in a product-based mind-set – in terms of the way we measure our work'.

When viewed alongside the changes we're seeing in the development sector, this all presents some interesting opportunities for organisations that straddle arts and civil society, like the British Council. At a time when both sectors are beginning to embrace the idea of doing things differently, a more socially-engaged artistic practice adds real value to the development world. How to articulate and evidence the value and impact of arts-led development initiatives and how best to explore and unpack the intersection of the culture and development agendas is work that will be ongoing. However, through the mapping exercise for this paper, we've come across a number of organisations, funders, individual practitioners and researchers whose work helps us understand more about what's needed, and what's potentially exciting, in terms of cross-sectoral collaboration.

In the context of the development sector, we've seen the arts being applied in the following broad thematic areas;

- **Arts and new narratives** – addressing divisive narratives – class, gender, religion, disability, mono-cultural, nationalistic, patriarchal.
- **Arts and shared human experience** – fostering community cohesion, working with difference, battling isolation and dislocation, refugees and host communities, rural communities.
- **Arts and skills development** – enabling subsistence, building resilience under pressure, securing livelihoods, improving quality of life, developing emotional literacy.
- **Arts and empowerment** – finding agency, improving self-belief, boosting confidence, increasing the ability to articulate emotions and to develop and maintain positive relationships

So, what does this mean in practice? And what can we learn from it?

How might organisations with a strong social motive capitalise on potential opportunities in different parts of the current arts and social change eco-system? Where are the moments for collaboration across arts and civil society? Are there opportunities to co-design programmes or interventions that champion an artistic process whilst delivering robust evidence-based developmental impact? How can we learn from those already doing this, or from those operating in either the arts or civil society sectors to inform our practice?

We're seeing how systemic problems require systemic solutions and need tackling from all sides – from individual agency and expression, to mobilising and organising, to structural opportunities and an enabling environment, to the public narrative. Whilst it won't always be what's needed or be the best fit, an arts approach is one way of working effectively in a constantly changing world. Below we explore the role arts can play, and expand on why, and when, it can be powerful.

Arts and new narratives (narrative, privilege and power) - How do we tell the stories of change? Where are the narratives around change currently being developed or held?

UK organisations can adopt arts-led approaches to widespread development challenges in order to;

- **Catalyse the 'Radical Imagination'**, supporting people to imagine the present and the future differently**,** boosting our capacity to make common cause with the experiences of others; *'it undergirds **our capacity to build solidarity across boundaries and borders, real or imagined.'**[13]*
- **Develop, test and evolve new creative tools** to explore personal/ group/ community/ collective/global narratives.
- **Provide safe spaces** to explore complex personal narratives; supporting a move away from homogenised identities by generating a range of different narratives that **embrace the non-linear and non-binary.**
- **Disrupt the status quo** and challenge 'who tells the stories' and 'about whom they are told'. Exploring how, in a world where the narrative has largely been driven by those with privilege and power, we can **prioritise and evolve an effective practice which embraces diversity.**

I think it's about feeling valued, being seen, and feeling that you have a voice. It was the first time I experienced warmth and felt in safe hands. I've had a lot of support with my recent housing crisis as well as emotional and practical help with anything I ever needed to talk about. * Quote from Cardboard Citizen Members, Cardboard Citizens - telling stories of homelessness need to be told, through theatre performed on the stage, in the street, in hostels, centres and prisons.

Arts and (shared) human experience - How do we provide strategic platforms, dynamic programmes and creative opportunities that celebrate humanity and empathy?

The UK can develop new arts-led approaches that;

- **Catalyse and deepen relationships,** including across difference, by hosting spaces for shared exploration into community needs and solutions.
- **Support people on the margins of society** to tell their stories and have their voices heard; this could include prisoners, refugees or victims of violence.
- **Explore identity,** the potential and scope of **new shared identity** (both literal and figurative) through value-led encounters & empathic connections.
- **Inspire new community leaders;** the skills, knowledge and experiences developed in the safety of an arts experience can be applied in a much wider context and contribute to continued social change.
- **Challenge assumptions** of traditional development approaches and propose brave new alternatives that champion inclusivity, diversity and flexibility.

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[13] Max Haiven and Alex Khasnabish of the Radical Imagination Project, *The Radical Imagination: Social Movement Research in the Age of Austerity*

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'The funders may be 'expert', for instance on art (or health, or social cohesion), but our communities are the 'experts' on their local context, their appetite for different kinds of art, the demographic of the community'. She was just not sure this was a position held equally by all stakeholders. 'In an ideal world' she went on to say, 'there would be movement on both sides, towards each other, or a celebration of difference.' Instead she felt, 'A lot of the time…we are twisting and turning. As are our communities.' - Insight into the challenge of navigating the complex relationship between community stakeholders and funders from a Creative People and Places Project[14]

Arts and collective agendas - How do we find new ways to look at the shared agendas? How do we create the spaces where representative voices can be heard?

Through creative partnership models, the UK sector can:

- **Invest in new, arts-led facilitation methods** to host safe spaces for dialogue across difference.
- **Engage decision makers and key influencers** in the human consequences and emotional impact of their choices and decisions.
- **Develop and champion artists who can act as social leaders** or community members who have energy and enthusiasm but not necessarily any formal experience of the arts.
- **Explore new models of convening meaningful exchange** which can influence policy in an era of post-truth politics. Use metaphor and the body to facilitate **dialogue and collaboration** across diverse sectors and competing agendas.

Art as a shield – how can we speak truth to power?[15] How can we reflect the social realities of existing power dynamics?

For UK organisations, there is potential to host new spaces which create the conditions to:

- **Stand up and be heard** - giving people confidence, clarity & a network of support. The process should creatively explore the dynamics of the relationships and the systems around us; interpersonal, communal, and global. It should take risks, embrace failure and learn by doing.
- **Support communities struggling to engage in dialogue.** The shield of the arts can be used as an effective and often safer way of expressing or exploring difficult issues.
- **Explore a rights-based approach;** empowering people, through collaborative creative activity, to explore their human rights & develop self-efficacy and self-organising skills - mobilising communities to move towards the change they want to see.
- **Catalyse and/or support provocations to challenge the status quo,** bringing together difference to change the conversation, unpack assumptions and generate new collaborations and partnership models.
- **Scale up, devolve and connect existing initiatives.**

[14] *from* [Power Up!] *the 2017 Creative People and Places think-piece by Dr Chrissie Tiller, with specific reference to a Critical Friend's insight into a, Creative Barking and Dagenham led project's challenges..*
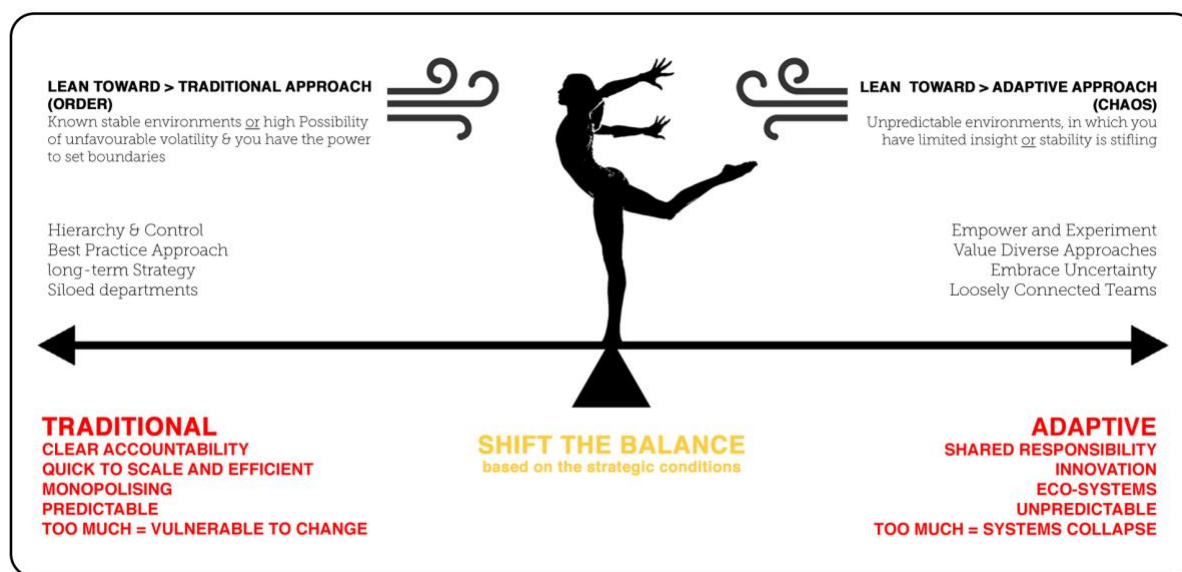[15] [Daswani, N. From Dada to Davos, how artists speak truth to power], *cited by Chrissie Tiller in the bibliography for* [Power Up!]

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The tricky balancing act – A compass not a map

There are a number of strategic tensions facing organizations who are working with both arts and development. What follows are visual representations of key tensions as well as some insights around how they could be navigated. We use the metaphor of balance, leaning in different directions at different moments, to help explore how and when to apply strategic agility.

It should be noted that in making strategic choices there is no single 'right way'. What works is entirely dependent on the diverse and changing conditions you are working with both internally and externally. Furthermore, having a broad range of diverse approaches applied by different 'actors' is vital for tackling today's social issues. At the same time, we believe there are some tools which could be useful provocations when deciding on a strategy – for many of us combining arts and development is new territory and these tools can provide us with a compass, though they don't necessarily provide us with a map.

One apparent tension faced by many organizations is the desire/pressure to deliver to scale, plan for the long term and be accountable whilst at the same retaining the flexibility to respond socially and artistically to a dynamic, ever-changing environment. Alongside more 'traditional' arts or development organizational strategies that deliver art *to* an audience or change *to* a community, a diverse array of agile interventions and approaches have emerged in recent years in which the arts enable the co-creation of change. The below diagram is a rough illustration of how and when to lean towards these more traditional (control) or agile (flexible) strategies.

LEAN TOWARD > TRADITIONAL APPROACH (ORDER)
Known stable environments or high Possibility of unfavourable volatility & you have the power to set boundaries

Hierarchy & Control
Best Practice Approach
long-term Strategy
Siloed departments

LEAN TOWARD > ADAPTIVE APPROACH (CHAOS)
Unpredictable environments, in which you have limited insight or stability is stifling

Empower and Experiment
Value Diverse Approaches
Embrace Uncertainty
Loosely Connected Teams

TRADITIONAL
CLEAR ACCOUNTABILITY
QUICK TO SCALE AND EFFICIENT
MONOPOLISING
PREDICTABLE
TOO MUCH = VULNERABLE TO CHANGE

SHIFT THE BALANCE
based on the strategic conditions

ADAPTIVE
SHARED RESPONSIBILITY
INNOVATION
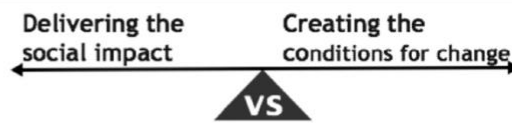ECO-SYSTEMS
UNPREDICTABLE
TOO MUCH = SYSTEMS COLLAPSE

Credit to Daniel Smith (TCC) and James Edleston (createadaptorg) for visual, and collaboration on wider thought piece

In reality it's never a case of either/or; every intervention is based on establishing a mix of the more traditional control-based and agile strategies. If, for example, an organisation is keen to first discover more about existing practice and will then look at developing scale-able and accountable interventions, one possible strategy would be to begin by applying approaches which sit just to the right of centre: embracing experimentation, valuing different approaches and ideas, cultivating open conversations and in doing so build the knowledge and relationships to gradually move just left of centre where it's possible to design scale-able yet flexible partnership-based interventions which can be adapted and grown according to context.

There are lots of other fundamental tensions for collaboration across the arts and development, where applying the above model could help to inform your strategic choices;

Quality of artistic output — **Community led & accessibility** — VS

Should we focus on fostering the emergence of 'high quality' artistic product or on ensuring a process of community ownership and accessibility ?

Delivering the social impact — **Creating the conditions for change** — VS

Should we cultivate the eco-system (enabling environment) in which locally owned positive change happens or should we make more direct interventions that deliver more definite change in communities?

Sectoral / Departmental — **Cross-sectoral / Connected teams** — VS
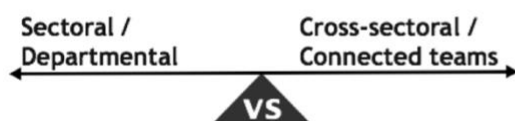
How can sector or department culture and insight contribute to more impactful connected approaches?

Established practice & core values — **Innovation** — VS

How can we balance more established practice and core values with the need for innovation, experimentation and risk?

Planned growth — **Slow emergence** — VS

How can the need for a participatory, responsive process be balanced against the pressure to deliver pre-determined outcomes and to scale and grow?

Size of intervention / intervener — **Agility** — VS

Do larger organisations have a specific role to play in the eco-system? Should they leave the innovation to the more radical? Or should they be leading the way in 'thought leadership and practice?'

Art delivering a message — **Art as a catalyst** — VS

How are we using the arts? Are we showing somebody else how I see the world or are we using the arts to support them to see the world differently?

'Best practice' which can be transplanted — **Good practice based on local conditions** — VS

Does good practice only really exists in a particular social context? When we are talking about sharing good practice we need to understand the purpose, the approach and the conditions' *if these are the conditions that exist then these are the approaches that are working'*

Whether an organisation leans more in one direction or another will often reflect its implicit purpose, needs and abilities as well as its internal culture, mindsets and values. However, there may be times where, based on the external conditions (environment) in which it operates that it will be important to demonstrate the agility to shift and therefore preparing the ground for this shift is vital.

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The enabling environment – organisational culture

Below is a table that highlights some of the changes in organisational culture that may be useful if you're looking at working cross-sector ally in an emerging field of practice[16]. This table isn't exclusively for organisations working in the field of arts and development but it does resonate with the experience of a number of the organisations explored in this thought piece. As with the balance diagrams above, it's not that one approach is inherently better than the other, and the reality is that organisational cultures usually occupy the many spaces that exist between the archetypal models indicated. Nevertheless, embracing more flexible approaches is increasingly recognised as an effective multi sectoral response to working with change in an inter-connected and uncertain world[17].

Traditional approach	Contemporary /Agile approach
Siloed teams and programmes	Connected teams and programmes
Large teams central locations	Small teams globally distributed
Project or programme focus	Change focus
Making change happen	Cultivating conditions for change
Top-Down	Bottom-Up
Fixed hierarchies	Fluid hierarchies
Messaging	Storytelling
Clear management type	Diverse management teams
Command and control	Empowerment / local ownership
Five-year plans	Iterative testing with rapid feedback
Strategy driven	Purpose driven
Fixed Key Performance Indicators, output driven	Learning, adapting, improving, outcome driven
M + E separate from delivery team	M+E+Learning embedded

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[16] *The table is adapted from various articles/research on changing management paradigms; www.forbes.com/sites/stevedenning/2013/08/05/the-golden-age-of-management/#68dd94605692*
[17] *From doing development differently, to agile businesses, to modern economic theory, to eco-system management, to artificial intelligence, to applied improvisation, to theories around resilience, adaptive approaches are increasingly present across different sectors.*

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Given the wide range of current arts and development initiatives it appears that the eco-system in the UK and elsewhere is currently oriented towards smaller-scale interventions. However, as larger institutions begin to grapple with the implications and opportunities of cross-sectoral collaboration, medium to larger scale interventions are gradually appearing. Below is an overview of possible small, medium and large-scale interventions followed by examples of different types of intervention.

Smaller scale:
- Facilitate cross-sectoral conversations around key issues.
- Identify emerging trends and outliers in arts, development and elsewhere.
- Explore different lenses, processes and practices.
- Seed ideas with potential.
- Incubate emerging innovations.
- Pilot safe-to-fail projects.

Medium scale:
- Facilitate collaborations across difference using an emergent approach – responding to the needs and interests of those involved as they emerge and following where these new relationships lead.
- Pilot a whole systems approach to one issue (or a nexus of issues).
- Develop a collective impact pilot involving multiple partners.
- Focus on scaling outcomes and not organisations.
- Support longitudinal research.

Larger scale:
- Large-scale investment in programming, organizational and cross-sectoral capacity building and development.
- Create the conditions for networks to emerge across diversity bringing different actors together in both loose and tight relationships.
- Long-term incubation of effective and innovative practice.
- Multi-pronged systems wide interventions.

Possible Interventions

When considering strategic interventions, we can often head towards strategies that have worked before. Perhaps it's useful to take some time to pause, and to explore what other approaches could also fit. Below are some broad examples of possible types of interventions, based on recommendations for British Council but applicable to other medium and large-scale organisations;

Large scale programmes
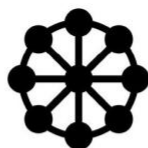
Convening approach
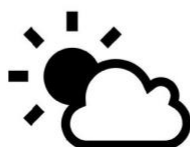Supporting collaboration across diverse sectors: arts, development, science, tech and business

Testing and seeding
Experimenting with small-scale innovation and proto-typing.

Scaling up, devolving and connecting
existing initiatives internally with British Council and externally

Creating the conditions
to support the emergence of arts for social change in different countries / communities.

Thought Leadership
positioning British Council as a credible leader within the sector

Funding body
a grant giver, traditional donor led 'charity'

Curator
roaming exhibitions around social issues (Grayson Perry etc)

Disruptor
provocations, bringing together difference, challenging the status quo

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Starting conversations

Whatever your role in the arts or development sectors, we hope this thought piece has been a useful provocation. We see great potential at the intersection of arts, culture, development and systems change. There are undoubtedly exciting opportunities for organisations to explore their own balance, not just in isolation, but as part of an eco-system. There are of course challenges to shifting mindset and approaches, particularly within larger organisations, but we've seen how the arts is well positioned to help create the conditions to support some of these changes, in organisations and in communities.

Sitting at the centre of the intersection, large scale cultural institutions clearly have an important role to play but they shouldn't be having these conversations on their own. We think there are exciting and important conversations to be had across the board, and hope this piece generates some of those conversations. If you need prompts, the following questions could be a good place to start;

Arts organisations

- How do we assess the alignment of our values and purpose with our strategy and practice? How do we become more aligned?
- How do we capitalise on the shift from consumption to collaboration, voice, people and agency we're seeing in the arts sector?
- How do we respond to changing conditions? What is our capacity to adapt?
- How can we maintain a sense of balance and resilience in the face of competing pressures?
- Are we confident to try new things and learn from failure, including internally and in partnerships?
- What is our role within the communities around us and how do we ensure we're putting them at the heart of what we do?

Development organisations

- How might we foster more fluid and dynamic relationships through partnerships to support wider impact, increasing reach, driving innovation and creating the conditions for better social outcomes?
- How does the development sector become more like the dancer on the balance beam?
- As the more traditional institutional approach of instrumental participation and experts in their field makes room for something different, how do we choose the right strategic approach?
- How can we connect with arts organisations and practitioners to explore possibilities and work towards a more shared narrative?
- Is it possible to imagine a post-sectoral world that adds up to more than the sum of their parts?

We look forward to feedback and to continuing the conversations.
The Change Collective, October 2018
www.thechangecollective.com

The Change Collective

Case Studies;

INQUIRY INTO THE CIVIC ROLE OF ARTS ORGANISATIONS:

- The report highlights arts organisations with a civic role and explores common features. The examples are dedicated to artistic excellence as well as fostering individual creativity. The organisations often have inspiring leaders who are committed to a civic role. People and local communities are at the heart of their practice. Place matters. Developing relationships and strong connections are central to their approach. They seek to integrate their work with communities and their artistic programmes. Many understand the imperative to be relevant, especially with recent political upheavals. Case Studies

SOCIAL CHANGE - AN ESME FAIRBURN GRANTS PROGRAMME

- Ambitious and challenging work that puts those who have been marginalised at the heart of creating change. Aiming to give people the power to develop their own voices, shine new light on areas of need and challenge the cultures, systems and behaviours that stand in the way of change.

    - Participation – marginalised and excluded individuals and groups Case Study
    - Place – revitalising community life Case Study
    - Injustice – systemic change around injustice and inequality Case study

SOCIAL POWER JUNE 2018 HOW CIVIL SOCIETY CAN 'PLAY BIG' AND TRULY CREATE CHANGE

- This report makes a case for a new conception of civil society potential called '**Social Power**' and sets out recommendations to unlock this latent capacity. Exploring barriers to collaboration, working creatively, thinking afresh about how to pursue change, performance management systems that cannot cope with complexity or uncertainty, and that actively work against agility and responsiveness. Also looking at the sector working to commercial models and cultures which distort value Case Study

SOCIAL SCULPTURE: ENABLING SOCIETY TO CHANGE ITSELF - JEFF BARNUM, REOS PARTNERS

- Focusing on systemic change projects, they have a rigorous set of transformative methods that enable people mired in complexity, confusion, and conflict to work together to construct new realities—and a better future. We help people make breakthroughs with projects that span days, months, or years. The results range from new understandings and commitments to new initiatives and institutions. They believe that a single skillfully organised event can be the genesis of a systemic shift. Case Studies

ARTS AND SOCIAL CHANGE - THE RSA

- Exploring the intersections between the arts and citizenship; what it means to belong in a place and connect with others in order to make it better. They didn't want it to be a series of disconnected arts projects, nor a research project that 'used' the arts, but a strategic programme that explored practical and imaginative tools for working together to create positive social change for both the arts and non-arts communities. Case Study

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