

# Multiplying Leadership in Creative Communities

## **n. Multiplying Leadership:**

*an open, collaborative style of working with others which tends to decentralise and flatten authority, bringing many more voices into leadership and decision-making than typical hierarchical structures*

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*the act and art of connecting potential leaders to each other in clear, productive structures so that everyone involved is active in the leadership of an organisation, project or community*





Sufi chanters, Shape Note singers and local residents come together to share in music and song in the disused Brierfield Mill. Shapes of Water, Sounds of Hope, a collaboration between Suzanne Lacy, Super Slow Way and In-Situ. Photo: Graham Kay

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<b>1</b>	<b>About this report</b>	5
<b>2</b>	<b>About Creative People and Places and this research</b>	6
<b>3</b>	<b>Introduction and summary</b>	7
<b>4</b>	<b>Context: thinking about leadership</b>	9
<b>5</b>	<b>Five 'context' quotations</b>	16
<b>6</b>	<b>CPP leadership approaches: Multiplying leadership</b>	17
<b>7</b>	<b>Peter Block: Towards stewardship in abundant communities</b>	24
<b>8</b>	<b>Exploring the new world</b>	26
<b>9</b>	<b>Performance and what matters most to the CPP network</b>	27
<b>10</b>	<b>21 thoughts from interviews with CPP directors</b>	30
<b>11</b>	<b>A framework for multiplying leadership practice</b>	31
<b>12</b>	<b>Dividing leadership: The opposite of multiplying leadership?</b>	34
<b>13</b>	<b>53 elements of CPP leadership practice</b>	35
<b>14</b>	<b>Healthy leadership – CPP suggestions</b>	45
<b>15</b>	<b>So what?</b>	46
<b>16</b>	<b>Implications</b>	47
<b>17</b>	<b>The main argument on one sheet</b>	48
<b>18</b>	<b>Leadership approaches: Recommended reading</b>	49
<b>19</b>	<b>Multiplying Leadership practice cards/questions</b>	51

## Getting around this report

Leadership within creative communities was repeatedly described to me as non-linear. This document is a bit that way too. This might be a risk, but I was told so often by those I interviewed that risk-taking was essential to multiplying leadership, I felt I should give it a go...

You can, of course, read this report from beginning to end. However, it might be helpful to some to know that you'll get the gist if you just read the introduction on page 7, or you can find a one-page summary/reminder on page 49. To get straight to discussion of Creative People and Places' leadership approaches, head for page 17; for a summary of the Multiplying Leadership framework you can skip to page 27; and if you want to see the 'So What' first, go straight to page 46.

You'll also see some 'breakout boxes' throughout. These are placed adjacent to relevant parts of the main argument, but can be read separately or returned to later.

THINKING  
PRACTICE/

**Mark Robinson/Thinking Practice**

**[www.thinkingpractice.co.uk](http://www.thinkingpractice.co.uk)**

Mark Robinson founded Thinking Practice in 2010, through which he writes, facilitates, coaches and advises across the cultural sector. He is the author of influential papers such as *Making Adaptive Resilience Real* and *The Role of Diversity in Building Adaptive Resilience* (co-written with Tony Nwachukwu) and has given keynotes, talks and workshops across the UK and internationally. In 2017 Bluecoat published *Inside Outside Beyond: Artistic Leadership for Contradictory Times*. Previous reports for Creative People and Places include in 2016 *What It Does to You: Excellence in Creative People and Places* with Consilium, and *Faster But Slower, Slower But Faster* a summary of learning from the first two years of the programme.

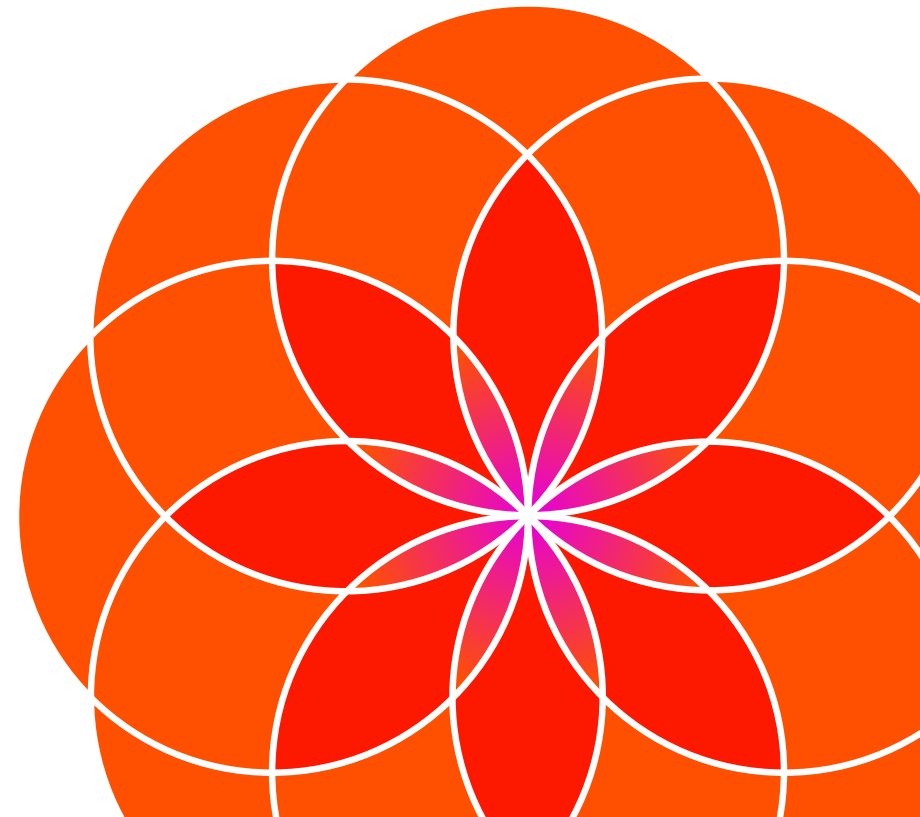
Mark was previously Executive Director of Arts Council England, North East and Director of Cleveland Arts. He has also run festivals, poetry publishers, community arts programmes and worked in adult education. Before working professionally in the arts, he had a successful career as a chef in vegetarian restaurants. Mark is a widely anthologised, translated and award-winning poet whose Selected Poems, *How I Learned to Sing* was published by Smokestack in 2013. His poem 'The Infinite Town' is carved onto a big plinth on Stockton High Street. Mark has been Chair of AV Festival, Swallows Foundation UK and Vice-Chair of Seven Stories. He is currently a trustee of Unfolding Theatre.

This report is informed by:

- 24 semi-structured interviews with Creative People and Places directors or co-directors
- 10 semi-structured interviews with other leaders, development bodies and researchers
- A rapid literature review focusing on cultural leadership, social leadership and systems leadership with a bias towards 'grey' and openly published material rather than academic
- An online survey of CPP staff, consortia members and others, e.g. artists or critical friends
- A leadership development day at the University of Lincoln, jointly organised by CPP Peer Learning Network and Clore Leadership
- A workshop with the CPP Peer Learning Network at their Gathering in September 2019
- Feedback on earlier drafts by a range of invited critical readers
- Conversations with the CPP network peer learning and communications team

Thanks to the many people who have enriched my thinking. I'm grateful especially to CPP directors for their time, frankness and generosity, and to Amanda Smethurst and Tamsin Currer from the CPP Peer Learning and Communications programme. Thanks also to those interviewed working in community and social settings, those developing leaders and those researching systems and behaviours.

The analysis and synthesis are, however, my own, as are any factual errors, misreadings, clumsiness or omissions.



## 2 About Creative People and Places and this research

Creative People and Places (CPP) is an action research programme happening in 21 areas across England, aimed at increasing arts engagement by bringing artists and local people together so more people choose, create and take part in brilliant art experiences where they live. It was initiated and is mainly funded by Arts Council England. Over three rounds, and now several phases of work, 21 independent projects have been supported. Arts Council England have recently announced awards to 12 new Places, and have committed funding to future programmes. Some Places are now on their third phase of funding.

### 21 Creative People and Places projects:

#### Round 1

1. Appetite: Stoke
2. Museums Northumberland bait: South East Northumberland
3. Creative Barking and Dagenham
4. Ideas Test: Swale & Medway
5. Left Coast: Blackpool & Wyre
6. Right Up Our Street: Doncaster
7. Transported: Boston & South Holland

#### Round 2

8. Back to Ours: Hull
9. Creative Black Country
10. Creative People and Places Hounslow
11. Creative Scene: North Kirklees
12. Cultural Spring: South Tyneside & Sunderland
13. East Durham Creates
14. First Art: Ashfield, Bolsover, Mansfield & North Derbyshire
15. Heart of Glass: St Helens
16. Made in Corby
17. Peterborough Presents
18. Super Slow Way: Pennine Lancashire

#### Round 3

19. Home: Slough
20. Market Place: Fenland and Forest Heath
21. Revoluton: Luton

The CPP network is committed to reflection and learning and with funding from Arts Council England has commissioned a range of thematic studies. This research was commissioned to explore and contextualise how leadership has been approached across the CPP network, and to share any relevant learning, as this topic had been identified as important in previous studies including those considering audience engagement, decision-making and power.

For a long time, ‘Leadership’ has felt like a tender spot in the cultural sector, with increasing pressures on individuals at all levels. It’s one I’ve poked at a number of times, in work on adaptive resilience and the *Inside Outside Beyond* framework commissioned by Bluecoat which considered ‘artistic leadership in contradictory times’. I am grateful to the CPP network for this commission, which has given me the chance to look into the subject again by considering leadership approaches across the network. I have especially sought to identify similarities and differences with other approaches, and to summarise what I think is interesting and useful for others working across the cultural and social sectors, particularly those working where these coincide. I hope it allows people to get a relatively swift take on the landscape, and describes CPP leadership approaches so they can be understood, critiqued and built upon.

What is most important here, I suggest, is that a fundamental contribution of CPP in Places has not been to *add* to infrastructure or arts engagement in so-called cold spots, as perhaps originally envisaged, but to *multiply leadership* within the community and systems active in places rich with people and ideas. They have done this by building trust, being open and positive, and sharing control. Multiplying leadership means more people

become confident in leadership work, but it also means vastly more connections between people, which encourages more collaborative, less patriarchal structures for informed decisions, action, co-creation and learning.

I describe here a framework for that practice. This is an open, collaborative style of working with others which tends to decentralise and flatten authority, bringing many more voices into leadership and decision-making than typical hierarchical structures. It is also, crucially, the act and art of connecting potential leaders to each other in clear, productive structures so that everyone involved is active in the leadership of an organisation, project or community. As such, elements of it can be seen not just in CPP leadership approaches, although that is my focus. These approaches are part of broader movements working to decentralise power and break down patriarchal and hierarchical versions of culture. Leadership is changing not for the sake of innovation alone, but to redefine what cultural engagement and capabilities might mean when everyone is involved.

CPP, at its best, has injected new, more open and collaborative leadership into those systems. It has been ‘in the room’ with its vision, and with unusual suspects. This is now deepening at governance level in some places, with independent community members joining

consortia discussions. It has been conscious of those *not* in the room, and sought to host new conversations. It has brought an approach of ‘saying yes and’, as part of its action research ethos. CPP’s influence, alongside that of others, may demonstrate what Graham Leicester wrote in a prescient paper for *Mission Models Money* in 2008: ‘We are more likely to act our way into a new way of thinking than think our way into a new way of acting.’

It would be misleading to say CPP leadership approaches are either all successful all the time, all the same, or unique within the social or cultural sectors. What I have found, though, is a distributed model of leadership rooted in connection and learning. The network has built on de-centralising and ‘anti-heroic’ strands of leadership practice. CPP leadership can be described as a team game, a collaborative effort of people in relationships, working for each other and the collective across groups, types and power dynamics. In this, it challenges deeply ingrained, dominant ideas about leadership, accountability and control. It also makes it hard work at times for the individuals involved.

It has multiplied the number and range of people involved in leadership within the community and within the systems active in the Places. As will be seen, sharing power, including decision-making, has been of

paramount importance, alongside a willingness to learn from failure and an open, trust-building approach. A range of people involved feel this is making a positive difference. Knowing the people and place, connecting people and ideas and building trust have been key. They have seen leadership as a non-linear, sometimes messy practice, not a set of skills or actions to be turned on. CPP has built teams which bring in a good range of voices and backgrounds. The leadership across the network has a much higher proportion of women than is typical, with flexible work patterns common, and there are examples of progression from non-traditional backgrounds. The teams are generally small and there is support from host organisations, which may allow a greater external partnership focus, especially where the host is a non-arts organisation.

CPP is not unique in this, but part of a progressive movement you can see all over the UK, of people developing and modelling leadership in different ways than archaic heroic, individual-centred models. I contrast the example I was given of a chief executive who preferred to meet people of equivalent job title with that of an artistic director I saw quite naturally handing out ice cream and shifting tables and clearing up as part of hosting a conference this year. One, I believe, was living

in the 19th century, the other in the 21st. How far the collaborative, distributed model can take over from control, targets and ego may depend on our collective ability to multiply leadership in the next decade.

The Multiplying Leadership framework is not a job description or person specification, nor a just-follow-the-instructions-and-success-awaits 'how-to'. Although leadership is a process not a programme, as Peter Block – whose work on stewardship and community has been an inspiration for much of my thinking – has written, it feels more appropriate to describe this as a framework for practice. And it does take practice, as those involved have found.

Leadership academic Keith Grint says 'wicked problems' require 'messy' or 'clumsy' solutions. Writing about leadership without over-simplifying or over-complicating has felt, to me, like a wicked problem. One danger is it can easily sound as if leadership is one thing, rather than *multiple*. Even the collaborative leader can be made to sound heroic. I try to avoid that through my keyword: *multiplying*. This means diversifying not copying. The three key elements of connecting, collaborating and multiplying leadership can be done in many ways, using multiple and diverse combinations of skills, preferences and approaches. Here I describe a broad set of potential elements –

some vocabulary I hope can be used, adapted, remixed and built upon, or indeed over if appropriate. There are also coaching-style questions relating to each element for those who disagree with the idea that 'nothing is as practical as a good theory'.

If the number, range and diversity of people in leadership is to increase, an argument to which CPP practice has added its voice, leadership will have to be more *multiple* and *various*, transforming a cultural sector still dominated by white men in positions of formal authority. The skills and traits used will also multiply and applications differ. To that end parts of this report are more a set of ingredients with thoughts on what works together than menus and recipes to be followed step by step.

I hope it can be used to summarise CPP leadership approaches, and to add to or adapt others. I hope it does not lead to one 'new' leadership, but to many. To paraphrase Louis MacNeice, let us embrace the world's incorrigible plurality and things being various: multiply now.



# 4 Context: Thinking about leadership

I have considered CPP as both a cultural and a social programme. Its specific brief is to increase arts engagement in areas of statistically low engagement, and to work with local community members and groups, delivering excellence of both engagement process and cultural product. This has meant it has often worked in areas which also have significant indicators of multiple deprivation. Addressing these, or regeneration, is not part of its stated brief, but the correlation has often brought the cultural and the social together. What then is the current context in each of those areas? I shall describe them separately but the reality of many people and organisations is that they overlap or are one and the same thing.

## Cultural leadership

- Leadership important to policy for resilience, reach and impact
- Running an organisation and distributed, collective models
- Leaders (skills, capabilities, behaviours) v leadership (relationships, partnerships, working together)
- Questions of purpose, inclusion, power and control

Leadership is an important area in arts policy in England, seen as connecting to resilience, to workforce diversity, productivity and ultimately to quality and reach. Launching their Transforming Leadership fund in 2019, Arts Council England’s Director of Skills and Workforce Jane Tarr wrote that leadership is seen as ‘the most influential factor in shaping ways of working and workplace culture’. She also said: ‘We believe leadership exists inside and outside organisations, at all levels and career stages.’ The fund invested more than £7m into 18 projects.

In *The Construction of Cultural Leadership* Jonathan Price traces the development of the field, with particular reference to how leadership development responded to perceived difficulties in senior leadership positions in the 2000s. Price quotes Robert Hewison as suggesting the arts are ‘a system where only heroic leadership appears capable of overcoming all the obstacles and difficulties that are inherent in the system’. These factors have helped create a tendency I have observed, especially among trustees of charitable companies, to want leaders to provide what might be called inspiring, transformative stability, often in the name of artistic vision.

An emphasis on leadership as central to the resilience of organisations has influenced recent programmes. The *Museums and*

*Resilient Leadership* programme, for instance, argue that decision-making is ‘the key dimension’ and that ‘to define, energise and see through change, the leader must make decisions in the service of their organisation’. Although there are collaborative elements, the emphasis is on charismatic leadership modes: personal, organisational and relational capacity, presence, knowledge, communicating, entrepreneurialism. These include some elements which appear likely to exclude some groups, such as ‘good health and emotional balance’, which might limit leadership for people with ongoing health conditions.

Resilience programmes have been weighted to the organisation and the individual leader, rather than the community level. The essays in *Reflections on Resilience and Creative Leadership*, collected from leaders involved in the Boosting Resilience programme, for instance, cover topics such as commercialising creative assets, generating revenue from IP, as well as reflection as leadership.

Robert Hewison and John Holden, who contributed much insight to the creation and development of Clore Leadership, also co-wrote the influential Cultural Leadership Handbook. The model for leaders which emerges from this practical guide to ‘how to run a creative organisation’, combines the need to shift from hierarchy to network, from

fixed to fluid, with a practical focus on the necessary skills, competencies and behaviours for individuals. It is less concerned with collective action, and some aspects could create leader-dependency. A leader is, for instance, described as an inspirer, a direction setter, a problem solver, a controller.

*A Cultural Leadership Reader*, edited by Sue Kay and Katie Venner and published in 2010, contains a range of insight across themes of distributed and collaborative leadership within increasing complexity. It also includes a number of essays reflecting on diversity and voice in leadership teams. Although, as Sue Kay comments in an overview essay, the majority of contributions frame leadership as involving 'leaders, followers and common goals', the collection reflects a shift towards a more systemic approach, building on the work of Arts Council England's Cultural Leadership Programme (steered by Hilary Carty, now Director of Clore Leadership.)

*Changing Cultures*, a report for Arts Council England by Sue Hoyle and King's College London's Culture team argues that the challenges faced by the cultural sector include a changing external landscape, financial pressures, changing tastes and demographics of both audience and workforce talent mean that organisations need to become more inclusive and innovative if they are to be resilient.

The paper identifies a desire for leadership styles that are 'facilitative, flat and more diverse', though 'distributed leadership is still far from the norm'. It recognises that this is 'a special challenge to hierarchical models of leadership and create(s) new pressures that may exacerbate the already high risk of burnout in the sector, at all levels'.

The set of leadership competencies and behaviours suggested in 'Changing Cultures' builds on that developed by Hoyle during her time at Clore Leadership, with four core areas:

- Know yourself
- Build relationships
- Embrace change and innovate
- Be responsible



Figure 1: Leadership competencies and behaviours

Although the model might appear to focus on individual leaders and their skills, competencies and behaviours, including some that fit comfortably with older models (e.g. confident, decisive), the thrust of application of the key skills is towards flatter, less hierarchal, distributed leadership.

It thus connects to two other strands: renewed interest in variant strains of cultural democracy, and an increased focus on the civic role of arts organisations and activity. Arguments for greater cultural democracy have included strands calling for a broader range of creative activity to be recognised and supported, clustering around the notion of ‘everyday creativity’ championed in different ways by organisations such as [64 Million Artists](#) and [Fun Palaces](#). (The latter bringing art, science and other forms of creativity together on an equal footing in a community-led skill-sharing way.) It has also included arguments for devolution and reallocation of resources and decision-making from the Movement for Cultural Democracy and others. [Cultural Democracy in Practice](#), a report by 64 Million Artists for Arts Council England identifies a paradigm shift from the leader as ‘a leader with all the ideas who disseminates them to others’ to ‘a leader who facilitates others to have ideas’.

The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation’s [Inquiry into the Civic Role of Arts Organisations](#) has

put particular emphasis on leadership and governance, albeit couched in terms of the vision and belief in co-production of leaders. The Inquiry more often situates the civic role as including empowerment and enabling, terms which others dispute. In the Inquiry’s publication [What Would Joan Littlewood Say?](#) several interviewees frame the civic role as involving a letting go of control so others can recognise and exercise their own power. Doreen Foster, Director of Warwick Arts Centre says: ‘Our cultural institutions and cultural leaders need to get out of the way if they are really committed to change because it is only when they get out of the way that we can fully understand what others might want to do with the space.’

The Inquiry has partnered with other trusts and foundations and with lottery funders to support two large networks relevant to this discussion. [Creative Civic Change](#) is a partnership between Local Trust, the National Lottery Community Fund, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. It explicitly focuses on ‘the dynamic between artists and arts organisations and communities when communities take the lead’ and hopes to influence arts organisations to be less ‘top-down’. The [Co-Creating Change](#) network, convened by Battersea Arts Centre, brings together organisations working in a co-creative

way. This involves looking at how much agency people have at different points in a project – from set-up through activity including selection, use of resources and ownership of any output or outcomes. It emphasises ‘working in non-hierarchical ways to address a common issue, and which enables people and communities to be actively involved in shaping the things which impact their lives’ – although interestingly it does not mention leadership per se.

To summarise, then, I am drawn to an idea in Graham Leicester’s 2008 paper for Mission Models Money, [Rising to the Occasion](#), in which he sets out why the arts sector must play a larger role in reacting to a variety of global ‘crises’ of change. Cultural leadership, Leicester argues, is not about ‘putting Humpty back together again’, seeking stability, but must ‘help evolve the culture’. He suggests that ‘creative adhocracies’ – groups of people coming together to take on specific challenges rather than build organisations – should look to become not ‘crisis academies’ but ‘academies of hope’. This has echoes of the shift some CPP participants have reported about the effect of the programmes in often neglected or de-industrialised places – moving from being seen as problem places to being full of hope.

## Social leadership

- Power, accountability, connection and trust
- Asset-based community development
- Collaborative working

CPP brings together roots in long-established community arts practice with methods from community development. In this section I want to highlight some relevant strands from work in the social sector. The same contested shift from centralised hierarchies of control towards collaborative, distributive ways of leading in complex systems or ecologies can be seen.

Clore Leadership concentrates on cultural leaders, although many Fellows work in socially engaged contexts. In 2010, a sister organisation was created, Clore Social Leadership, which aims to 'develop leaders with a social purpose so that they can transform their communities, organisations and the world around them'. They have adopted a capabilities framework made up of six elements.

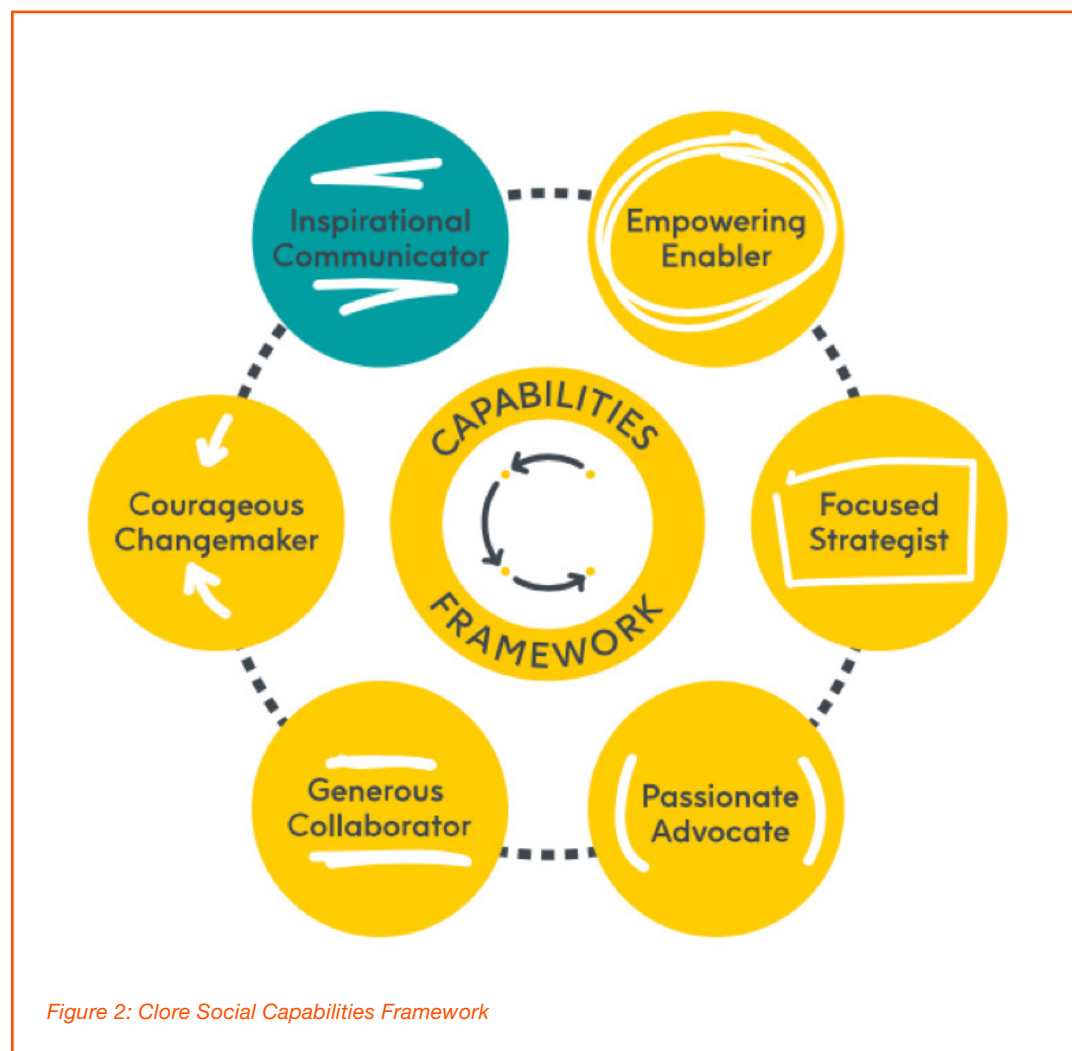


Figure 2: Clore Social Capabilities Framework

Clore Social have a place-based strategy of developing leadership across all forms of leaders – formal, informal, self-identified and nominated. In Hull the [HEY100 leadership development programme](#) encouraged a ‘pay it forward’ approach in which ‘leaders grow leaders’.

The idea of ‘generous leadership’ is also highlighted by the [National Lottery Community Fund](#), who want to encourage it through their work, in order to strengthen relationships and partnership working. Key elements for the fund are a concern with the ecosystem, sharing responsibility and power, openness and alliance-building. Shared values, a shared big picture and shared funding, data and systems are also identified as important.

The similarities between social sector concerns and those of the cultural sector can be found in the [Civil Society Futures](#) inquiry which ran from 2017-2018. This included cultural perspectives in exploring how civil society could flourish and tackle the big challenges faced by communities in the UK. It was a very wide-ranging inquiry which concluded in a call for organisations and individuals to commit to what it called a [PACT](#), focused on changing approaches to Power, Accountability, Connection and Trust. Follow-up activity has included a focus on leadership. This includes the need to broaden who leads by increasing access to power, resources

and networks for excluded groups. The future styles of leadership required are summarised as generous, open, distributive, inclusive, authentic and compassionate.

Another relevant set of characteristics for leadership in the context of collaboration is found in a report for the Government Outcomes Lab, [Are We Rallying Together?](#) This found a move from management of delivery to development of relationships, through three related leadership styles. These were ‘stewards’ who create shared understanding, ‘mediators’ who build trust across differences, and ‘catalysts’ who mobilise partners around new opportunities. Elements of the charismatic, heroic leader persist in the descriptions of leaders, however: ‘brave and visionary’ and ‘tough’, for instance. However, the need to ‘cede sovereignty’ is also picked out.

A key concept in community development and socially engaged cultural practice is summed up by the phrase ‘[asset-based community development](#)’. This moves away from a deficit model to build on what communities *do* have, often unacknowledged or under-appreciated. Pioneered by John McKnight, the approach has been shown to be less likely to encourage dependency and to build agency, confidence and sustainability. Key principles of the approach are that it is citizen-led, inclusion-focused and also that it works at the level of

neighbourhood in terms of place. This is clearly relevant to CPP, which has increasingly worked at a local and hyperlocal level.

The Collective Leadership for Scotland programme created by Workforce Scotland aims to develop people who can lead collaboratively, and to explore the what, why and the how of that in practice. Themes emerging include the power of the convenor and the conflicts sometimes wrapped up in collaborative leadership. Considering how to evaluate the activity, [Dr Cathy Sharp highlights the scale of work needed for collaborative leadership](#), right across an organisation or network, the multi-discipline, multi-perspective approach necessary which can sit awkwardly with involving other, differently skilled, community members or service users.

Overall leadership in the social sector follows the pattern of moving from heroic to relational – characterised by [Clore Social Fellow Richard Wilson](#) as moving from over-confidence in the rightness of one’s opinions, inflexibility, lack of empathy and refusing uncertainty to ‘empathy, humility, self-awareness, flexibility and, finally, an ability to acknowledge uncertainty’. A study of community leadership in South Africa makes a point which is relevant to the UK too: that collective leadership can co-exist in communities with a desire for heroic leadership.

## Systems thinking and other relevant strands

- Systems thinking and complexity
- Questions and openness
- From control to stewardship – anti-patriarchal, decolonised models

Both cultural and social and civil leadership have become increasingly influenced by systems thinking and complexity thinking. Systems thinking maps the inter-relationships and feedback loops between actions and people in a system, to bring out the non-linear complexity of things. It is a counter to a linear, ‘pull lever, make movement’ way of looking at cause and effect, and can be helpful for surfacing assumptions, connections and disconnections.

Complexity is different from complication, as there is no single logical response to a complex issue. This is often called a ‘Wicked Problem’. [Keith Grint has explored leadership in relation to wicked problems](#), and argued that they ‘require the transfer of authority from individual to collective because only collective engagement can hope to address the problem’. (Many phenomena, including arts engagement, can be framed as ‘wicked

problems’ but that is not always the most progressive way to frame them. Part of CPP’s journey as a programme has been in moving away from framing arts engagement in particular places as a problem towards a more asset-based community development framing.)

Leadership in complex systems is seen not as a position of authority but as a series of ‘events’ where people interact. These might be conversations, meetings, moments in the day of an organisation, but they are dynamic and relational, not static or hierarchical. Leadership *emerges*, in this view, rather than *is*. This emphasis on emergence is also found in the work of writers such as Peter Senge who has been influential in spreading a systems approach and collaborative processes. This fundamentally challenges some approaches to leadership. As Senge wrote: ‘Ineffective leaders try to make change happen. System leaders focus on creating the conditions that can produce change and that can eventually cause change to be self-sustaining.’

Many of the facilitation techniques used in defining purposes and strategy have roots in Senge’s techniques and his emphasis on empathy, communication, relationships and reflection. His practical basis is relevant to sectors such as culture and the social sector where learning by doing is a preferred style. He calls for ‘practice, practice, practice’, using the

tools with ‘the regularity and discipline needed to build their own and others’ capabilities’.

Systems leadership has become commonly advocated in the public sector, partly as a response to the many challenges faced by local authorities and those they work with in civil society. Collaborate CIC have worked with academic and ex-arts organisation director Toby Lowe to explore funding, commissioning and managing in complexity. This is largely applied to the place-based social and public sectors but is highly relevant to the cultural and socially engaged arts sectors. [Exploring the New World](#) argues for an approach summarised as ‘Human Learning Systems’, a frame Lowe described in interview as deriving from his work in the arts, where it became clear that an outcomes-focus was ‘the wrong frame for good work’. The Human Learning Systems framework stresses learning – including a need for funders to explicitly fund learning not outcomes – and a ‘positive error culture’ when things do not work as planned.

I want to conclude by exploring briefly some other areas useful for me in contextualising CPP.

First is the continuation of a shift first described by Daniel Goleman and written about recently by [Eve Poole](#), the coming together of IQ (commercial) and EQ (social) skills. Dry, data-driven management is increasingly out of tune

with a cross-generational workplace. Many teams will now combine people with different frames, different ages and life experiences and different, sometimes clashing takes on gender, sexuality, identity and equity. This requires sophisticated interpersonal skills from leaders and managers.

The distributed, decentralised models referred to earlier are explicitly seen by some writers as a necessary response to ethical or social justice failings in dominant power, command-and-control models. Leaders working in these ways, the argument goes, tend to be white, tend to be male, tend to not identify as disabled or LGBT+. Styles often mirror the power patterns and methodologies of privilege, patriarchy and colonial mindsets.

Peter Block explicitly addresses these areas, proposing ‘choosing service over self-interest’ as the beginnings of decolonising organisations to spread stewardship through communities: ‘...we have to decide whether to hold onto the power and privilege we have worked so hard to acquire, or to pass it on... We serve best through partnership, rather than patriarchy. Dependency is the antithesis of stewardship and so empowerment becomes essential.’

Block suggests that it is not simply the outcomes of organisations but the processes which embed patriarchal and colonial

paradigms in them and the people working within them. Organisational rituals such as meetings, reporting and performance appraisal, can combine, according to this argument, to subvert equity and collaboration. The structures and scaffolding of leadership conversations can free or subdue, create dependency and compliance or freedom, responsibility and commitment. The organisation can extract value or co-produce it.

These strands connect to an interest in decolonisation of institutional practice. Although this is often framed as the leadership necessary for the work – e.g. what kinds of leadership best decolonise museums, tackling issues of history and repatriation of stolen collection items - there are fewer people linking hierarchical, target-driven leadership to the colonial mindset of control and extraction of value leadership as Peter Block does. One such is Edgar Villanueva, author of *Decolonizing Wealth*. About decolonising leadership he writes: ‘We have to shift from our obsession with individual leaders to a focus on organisational design... moving us away from the colonised hierarchical pyramid structure, with its command-and-control leadership, to a realisation of how everyone has leadership potential...’

Finally, there is much read-across between feminist leadership thinking and the patterns

described above. In *A Cultural Leadership Reader*, Donna Ladkin suggests an ‘aesthetic of inclusivity’ to promote women in senior leadership. In *Feminist Leadership for Social Transformation: Clearing the Conceptual Cloud* Sriwatha Batriwala examines broader feminist theory. A quote she shares from Mahnaz Afkhami, Ann Eisenberg and Haleh Vaziri in the *Leadership Training Handbook for Women*, makes a suitable conclusion to this section: ‘Good leadership – leadership that serves both women and men, poor and rich, and the powerless and powerful – is inclusive, participatory and horizontal... the processes are just as important as the objectives themselves.’

# 5 Five 'context' quotations

'In a multitude of ways the work is riddled with discomfort. It can seem blurred and confusing. It makes sense to some and not to others. Does it offer something new or is it simply a re-working of the old? How does one devote care and attention to an initiative that feels useful without making it overly precious? How does one practise commitment without being a zealot? Is it feasible to hold true to what one believes is important while also welcoming dissent? There is much uncertainty and ambiguity which swirls about and I wonder what counter-force that activates? If the underpinning motivation is towards system change; disruption of the status quo; encouraging shifts in established ways of being, knowing and doing there will also be a pull towards stability and places of familiar comfort. I am left with a question of whether that tug between settled and unsettled states feeds into another tension – how to lean towards diversity rather than assimilation?'

**Frances Patterson:** *'The Power of Beginnings'*  
(Workforce Scotland)

'Though they differ widely in personality and style, genuine system leaders have a remarkably similar impact. Over time, their profound commitment to the health of the whole radiates to nurture similar commitment in others. Their

ability to see reality through the eyes of people very different from themselves encourages others to be more open as well. They build relationships based on deep listening, and networks of trust and collaboration start to flourish. They are so convinced that something can be done that they do not wait for a fully developed plan, thereby freeing others to step ahead and learn by doing. Indeed, one of their greatest contributions can come from the strength of their ignorance, which gives them permission to ask obvious questions and to embody an openness and commitment to their own ongoing learning and growth that eventually infuse larger change efforts.'

**Peter Senge, Hal Hamilton and John Kania:**  
*The Dawn of System Leadership*

'Our heroic impulses most often are born from the best of intentions. We want to help, we want to solve, we want to fix. Yet this is the illusion of specialness... If we don't do it, nobody will. This hero's path has only one guaranteed destination – we end up feeling lonely, exhausted and unappreciated. It is time for all us heroes to go home because, if we do, we'll notice that we're not alone. We're surrounded by people just like us. They too want to contribute, they too have ideas, they

want to be useful to others and solve their own problems.'

**Margaret Wheatly:** *Leadership in the Age of Complexity: From Hero to Host*

'I've lost faith in reforming anything that calls itself an organisation: They inevitably dehumanise us... organisations value people less and less and yet... there's enormous hope in humanising spaces in organisations... What dehumanises organisations is the system's design based on predictability, consistency and control. There can be experiments and exceptions locally for a while, but most often they are killed off by the system's requirement for consistency and predictability. My aim is to carve out spaces for human possibilities. I cannot change organisations – they have this inbuilt context, and the patriarchy is so deeply embedded in us – but I can decide every time how to occupy the room...'

**Peter Block,** in interview with Converse 8

'The most powerful thing that I or any leader in the arts can do is to lose control.'

**Madani Younis,** former Creative Director of South Bank Centre



## 6 CPP leadership approaches: Multiplying leadership

### Overview

*The fundamental contribution of CPP in Places has not been to **add** to infrastructure or arts engagement in so-called cold spots but to **multiply** leadership within the community and systems active in Places that are rich with people and ideas, by building trust, being open and positive, and sharing control. Multiplying leadership means more people becoming confident in leadership work, but it also means vastly more connections between people that creates more collaborative, less patriarchal structures for informed decisions, action and learning.*

The picture drawn in Section 4 is one of long-term change in how leadership is conceived by some people and constituencies. These are not uncontested, of course. One need only look at the realm of elected politics to see different ideas of what makes for effective leadership, demonstrated by both politicians and the public. Neither should the tension between openness and control be seen as an issue of ‘progressive’ or ‘liberal’ mindsets against ‘conservative’ or ‘authoritarian’ ones. There are advocates –

some vocal, some silent – for all kinds of leadership. This is true within the cultural sector as much as anywhere else.

There is a long history of practice in community arts and socially engaged practice, well documented now by writers such as François Matarasso, Alison Jeffers and Gerri Moriarty. Parts of Moriarty’s account of the early days of community arts in the north west of England could be taken directly from interviews with CPP directors and teams: ‘I talked very little and I listened a lot. My work became informed by the everyday difficulties and concerns of local people; I did not try to create a plethora of arts activities and expect people to turn up to take part in them. I tried to engage with and contribute my skills to the existing cultural life of the community; I did not try to drag an unwilling and disinterested community into ‘my’ version of culture.’

What we might now frame as CPP’s leadership approaches are not new but build on and form part of a long decentralising movement towards collaboration and stewardship and away from command-and-control hierarchies, including within culture and cultural value. Evaluation and research reports looking at CPP suggest that the programme is making a positive difference in terms of how many people are engaging, and the range of people, with 89% being low-medium arts engagers.

Broader definitions are being adopted and new ways of working with communities proving welcome and successful. This, as well as the testimony in our interviews described above, suggests the leadership approaches are having a positive impact.

Just as CPP as a capacity-building and engagement programme has evolved to respond to the results of particular systems rather than local ‘failures’, leadership patterns in the 21 Places can also be seen as part of a broader system. CPP has, to a large degree, moved on from its framing as tackling low engagement, as the different evidence from its work has challenged ‘low engagement’ stats, suggesting under-valued abundance not a deficit. (This is, to some extent, reflected in the changes in how Arts Council England frame the programme, with new rounds still limited in eligibility by engagement statistics, but requiring greater degrees of community involvement.) In leadership terms, those systems have been distorted by hierarchy, by target-setting, by lack of connection and collaboration. The wider arts infrastructure in many CPP Places is less diverse than the local population, a pattern driven by risk-averse governance and recruitment practices. What one interviewee termed ‘the arts leadership bubble’ is thus reinforced, arguably alienating parts of the population. Several CPP directors

argued that their connections to locality, and those of their teams, had been useful when building relationships and trust.

CPP, at its best, has injected new, more open and collaborative leadership into those place-based leadership systems. It has been ‘in the room’ with its vision, and with unusual suspects. (This is now deepening at governance level in some Places, with independent community members joining the consortia discussions that guide each Place’s work.) It has been conscious of those *not* in the room, and sought to host new conversations. It has brought an approach of engaging positively with ideas, people and groups ‘saying yes and’, as part of its action research ethos. As Peter Senge wrote: ‘Transforming systems is ultimately about transforming relationships among people who shape those systems.’

It would be misleading to say CPP leadership approaches are all successful all the time, all the same, or unique within social or cultural sectors. What I have found, though, is an at least partially successful intent to create models of distributed leadership rooted in connection and learning. CPP leadership is a team game, a collaborative effort of people in relationships, working for each other and the collective across groups, types and power dynamics.

The network has built on strands of leadership thinking that might be called de-centralising and ‘anti-heroic’. It has multiplied the number and range of people involved in leadership within the community and within the systems active in the 21 Places. Knowing the people and place, connecting people and ideas and building trust have been key. Asking the right questions at the right time has then helped create change. Those involved tend to see leadership as a non-linear, sometimes messy, practice, not simply a set of skills or actions to be ticked off. CPP has built teams which bring in a wide range of voices and backgrounds. The leadership across the network has a much higher proportion of women than is typical, with flexible work patterns common, and there are examples of progression from non-traditional backgrounds. The following sections look briefly at some areas of how CPP approaches to leadership have developed.

### CPP as multiplying leadership

Section 11 below sets out in more detail what I mean by multiplying leadership. It is at times a style of leadership, and at times an ongoing process. Often it is both simultaneously. (This may for some, be making language work too hard. Sorry not sorry about that.)

The academic and trainer [Liz Wiseman](#) has [written](#) about the way in which some leaders

can double effort and results from their teams, while the style of others actually reduces effectiveness and commitment. The diminishing leader, as she calls them, is a micromanager, a directive, know-better decision maker, as well as at times a controlling empire builder. (Note the colonial imagery). In contrast, multipliers attract and liberate talent, stretch people through challenge and debate and invest in others.

This is a theme which came up in several of the interviews with CPP directors. Investment in talented new leaders, either as part of the team or in the community, often leading to new independent groups, is increasingly seen as part of the exit strategy for the CPP projects entering later phases. Several interviewees described the talent that would be left as a central legacy of their work. For some, ‘doing ourselves out of a job’ was a major aim of CPP leadership development.

Fundamental to the multiplying function for CPP and Wiseman is a belief in people’s abilities and creativities. The core assumption has shifted from a deficit model, rejected by many early on in CPP’s evolution, to one of assuming the ability to figure things out and therefore looking for the ideas people have, or can create together. CPP seems to have become essentially people-led, working in particular places and systems *with* them, not

on them or doing things to or for them. In his presentation at the CPP/Clore Leadership Development Day, Phil Douglas of queer arts organisation Curious argued that 'I haven't led from the front, I have led from within. A For and With approach is honest and open and when most effective, agenda-less. The only outcome should be people-focused, from that genuine community-led content will be developed. Focusing on the 'with and how' rather than the 'what'.'

### Saying 'Yes And'

Keith Grint, talking of 'clumsy solutions' to 'wicked problems' calls for leaders to adapt the skills of the bricoleur, someone who combines and uses the materials to hand, rather than the purer approach of the engineer. He says leaders need 'to recognise that each situation was unique and thus not susceptible to expert resolution but sufficiently familiar for the bricoleur to deploy an array of techniques that might help reframe the problem and galvanize the collective to action'. This seems to me to reflect what I have observed and heard described within CPP approaches to leadership. As some artists use what is to hand, or improvisers say 'Yes, and...' the approach is based on a positive philosophy. Revolution's Producers Hub, a partnership with 1DegreeEast providing access to Continuing Professional Development, mentoring and long-

term support from producers, was, for instance, described as 'creating a yes economy, not no'. Each positive response leads to exploration and learning through experimentation and to building trust. This in turn brings others into the leadership activity. This flipside, however, is that several directors described themselves as having had to get better at saying no to things over the lifetime of the project, due to the pressures of time, and also becoming clearer about where they could add value.

The idea of 'saying yes and' also relates to the way in which CPP leadership has tackled issues of identity, self-image and perception about their Places – which are often portrayed negatively in the media and with a mixture of pride and negativity by local people themselves. As one director put it, CPP turns negatives into positives.

An attitude which says 'yes and' builds trust and opens possibilities. Sometimes this is done by asking the right questions at right time. One interviewee gave the example of a community who wanted to open a shop until being asked: 'Do you really want or need a shop or do you need a space?' led to them realising they had jumped to a solution rather than exploring possibilities.

The exploratory positivity of an action learning project such as CPP is, it should be conceded,

a more straightforward place to get beyond comfort and risk-reducing zones and into a safe space for risk-taking than many arts organisations with business critical issues to face and revenue income targets to meet. Sometimes, some chief executives might counter, it's just impossible for them to say yes so readily. This has been one of the privileges of CPP, although there have been targets from the beginning and Places moving into phase three increasingly have to consider income generation and fundraising as well as capacity-building and learning.

### Consortium working

Each CPP is led by a consortium. These must include a community organisation and an arts or cultural body, and they typically include other arts groups, local authorities, private sector, housing, health or others. Each has a lead partner who holds funding on behalf of the consortia and is ultimately responsible for the grant. They then employ a delivery team, usually including a director or co-directors with formal leadership authority. Some models vary, with some CPPs becoming independent organisations, but this is the most common.

The consortium nature of CPPs has meant that leadership has been shared and collective from the beginning, and part of

the role of directors has been to work with that collective of views, styles and ambitions. This has built multiplication into the work in a really positive way, often bringing in ‘unusual suspects’, especially in terms of community and social sector partners. It has, however, added complication at times for directors and consortium members, with attention being paid to equality, competition for resources and local dynamics, as well as different styles. Consortia mean CPP is by nature a multi-stakeholder environment both on the ground and at a governance level, which has drawn on and developed skills needed to work with groups. The consortia are structures, built to include a range of representation, insight and support. They are also relationships, and thus fluid and subject to change over time. This was described in interview as creating ‘a challenge of managing expectations and ethics – intellectually it’s complex and tiring’. Overall, my strong sense is that consortium working is an important factor in enabling CPP to work in different ways than many arts organisations.

The nature of each consortium – e.g. whether it is led by an arts organisation or a social sector charity – has influenced how things have developed. Some of the relationships with host organisations and their leaders have been challenging for directors, although there are different patterns to be found. For

some, being a cultural programme in a non-arts organisation has provided a clear social context, good networks, colleagues with complementary skills and direct routes into communities. For others, it has been isolating and some have felt they lacked support and supervision. For those hosted by cultural organisations, the downsides have included competition issues, which have become more apparent as the onus on CPP projects to raise funds has grown over the three phases, leading to difficult discussions sometimes over competing agendas within organisations. This competition is exacerbated by the pressure on organisations to ensure income and business resilience, while also hosting a developmental action research project in CPP. When these factors have combined with different leadership styles or imperatives, the impact on directors and their managers has sometimes been difficult.

### CPP as ecosystem leadership

In their report for CPP, *Creating the Environment: The Cultural Ecosystems of Creative People and Places*, Jonathan Gross and Nick Wilson argue for increased focus on ecosystem leadership. They position CPP as part of a network of organisations and influencers active in leading or stewarding local and by implication regional and national eco-

systems to achieve or maintain health. This suggests an onus on CPP to develop other leaders than its own teams. The report quotes a director as saying ‘I love it when people don’t need us anymore. And people find the confidence not to consult with us to do things, and that’s exactly the way it should be’. This was echoed many times in my interviews.

The traits of systems leadership identified by Peter Senge et al of openness, listening, trust and collaboration are all repeatedly identified as important to CPP leaders, in interviews and in the survey of teams. Managing and coordinating relationships and considering impact together come through as important factors. Reflection is noted as happening both with the various stakeholders in a place, and across the CPP network through the peer learning groups. The value of the peer learning network, supported by the Arts Council from the beginnings of CPP, and the network of critical friends are repeatedly connected by directors to their role within ecosystems of place and culture.

Gross and Wilson note that ‘ecological leadership is likely to require the ability to build partnerships in ways that combine both flexibility of membership/involvement and clarity of purpose: such that, regardless of the ebb and flow of funding, relationships last’. This is clearly a concern for those CPP projects

entering the later phases of their work, who are now looking to embed ways of working into the broader networks. One director described ‘a lot of stepping back and letting things happen, so the learning can be had – whilst knowing when to step in and out.’

One of the current challenges identified in interviews is the extent to which leadership within the system, and within CPP partners specifically, can be grown while projects transition into the last and then legacy phases of activity. The question was raised as to whether there are the people to pass leadership roles onto. In general the consensus was that more were needed. Some CPPs are turning their efforts specifically to this task, passing on leadership roles, making space for a younger and more diverse range of leaders to come through and practise their leadership skills. This feels very much in line with a ‘stewardship’ way of thinking about leadership.

## Place and politics

Many of the 21 Places within CPP at the time of our research – before the programme expands – are among the most deprived in England. Twenty of them had a majority of voters to leave the EU in the 2016 referendum. Many have experienced de-industrialisation and repeated attempts at regeneration. For a majority of Places, some aspect of social

justice or political enquiry has been an important starting point.

Heart of Glass, for instance, has seen itself as a ‘gentle disrupter’ of cultural, social and public bodies and how they worked. They have worked in what director Patrick Fox calls ‘partnership and solidarity’ with the community, developing, for instance, work to respond to cuts to women’s services. Fox describes the work as considering ‘what it means to co-exist now and what role you can play to help new knowledge emerge in the public sphere, using the public imagination to respond to democratic deficit.’

Several CPPs have lead organisations which are community organisations: e.g. Creative Black Country is based in Sandwell Council of Voluntary Organisations, and East Durham Creates is essentially now an integrated part of East Durham Trust which runs foodbanks and other support services such as benefit and debt advice. Malcolm Fallow, Chief Executive of the Trust also leads East Durham Creates, and credits CPP with what he calls ‘the artification of East Durham Trust’, having found a natural correlation between disadvantage and disengagement from the arts in the former coalfield area served. He felt he had to some extent to ‘knock on doors’ to get an insular cultural sector to join him in this shift, and found it refreshing to see Arts Council England

take risks and show leadership in backing the Trust when it took over as lead body from Beamish Museum, which was at some physical remove from the CPP area.

The politics of place can be hyperlocal, with big differences between neighbourhoods. Stakeholders involved in leading the place can be competitors as well as collaborators, and personalities can play their part too. The context is more complex than the traditional arts audience development model, once an attempt to multiply leadership and work co-creatively is made. As one interviewee put it: ‘Place-based leadership is far more than organisational – you need to have eyes open to context of the work not the market for the work.’

## Gender and diversity

There is, as mentioned, a higher proportion of women in formal positions of authority within CPP than is typical in, say Arts Council England’s National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs). (79% of CPP directors or co-directors interviewed are female, compared to 59% of NPO managers according to Arts Council’s [2017-18 report on workforce diversity](#).) Teams are also predominantly female. Some interviewees felt this had a real influence on their leadership approaches. One described it as inspiring too to see women leading

projects in the community, and another said that CPP was adding to modelling of a lot of female leaders in their county. One director said being part of ‘a team of women gives an understanding of family demands – the team dynamic is collegiate and familial.’ Another described a sense of serious play, and laughter less possible in teams dominated by traditional male perspectives.

To a lesser degree, leadership within CPP is also bringing in people from a wider range of backgrounds in terms of other characteristics. As a network and in some individual programmes, there are signs of progress in terms especially of ethnicity and class background. In Luton, for instance, this is deliberate and also flows from the emphasis on local recruitment, and the development of a team that can lead even more in the future. The director concluded that ‘the diversity of the team brings everything the theory says it does – and then some!’

Several directors interviewed described themselves as coming from non-traditional backgrounds for senior leaders. This was a productive and deliberate disruption for some, for others more of a personal challenge to break out of class, gender or ethnicity-based exclusions. For these leaders, the peer network had been a crucial support as they grew into their leadership roles.

### CPP leadership and ‘failure’

As an action research project, the ability to take risks and fail has been important to CPP as it is to artists. The ability to learn from failure and from things which did not go well is highlighted by staff, consortium members and others as one of the most important things in the survey carried out as part of this research. It is at the heart of CPP leadership approaches to be comfortable with failure, which is not the case with all leadership frameworks.

A ‘positive error culture’ embraces learning from unpredicted results, including failure, and helps build trust and confidence. Many interviewees talked of failure with relish. In East Durham, for instance, the work was paused after a year as the initial approach, although successful artistically in some ways, had failed to reach communities in the way intended. The programme changed tack significantly, which was a big learning experience for the team. Many CPPs have experimented with programme, small grant or other financial support, and community decision-making processes in a way which has focused on learning, rather than success/fail ‘inquest’.

This is not to suggest a lack of rigour in reflection. CPP is a highly reflective programme, at individual Place level and as a network, and has spent much time exploring

the successes and challenges of different approaches. Having a supported peer learning network has helped with this, and the network has clearly been valuable to many individuals at moments of stress or challenge. Consortium boards also have helped teams reflect on what has gone well and what has not worked as predicted or planned. Although CPP projects do create business plans with KPIs as part of their agreements with the Arts Council, it has shown flexibility around changes to programmes, which has been welcomed. This is healthy funder behaviour to be encouraged.

There was some concern expressed in interviews that the space for failure and risk was becoming smaller as the programme matured, and as funding reduced. As funding diversified, some wonder, will the pressures other organisations experience reduce the capacity for risk. There is a need to keep reminding both selves and others of the return-on-risk, as well as to be explicit and honest about failure.

### Challenging ‘leadership’

Some interviewees were uneasy with the word leadership. One felt that CPP, although an incredibly important programme, was not actually as complex a task as leading many other types of arts organisations, especially building-based organisations. Managing a CPP

programme was, they felt, most importantly about effective project management which facilitated everyone else associated with the programme to lead, rather than a director leading in the conventional sense. Others also felt that the leadership was coming from the community, some downplaying their own role in making that possible and seen through to results. Some were clear that their leadership approach was deliberately designed to subvert the traditional arts outreach model and the 'old boys club' network leadership in their area.

In general the trend is to decouple leadership from authority, agency and power wherever possible, and for power to rest with the community – of which CPP becomes part. (Where power enters, it is 'power with' rather than 'over'.) At times this has been the source of tension where other more directive or hierarchical leadership styles have been present in consortia or in the network active in a particular place. The lack of understanding of different leadership styles, and the drivers for them, has, from feedback, caused misunderstandings where greater articulation might have been helpful in finding the best ways to collaborate.

The size and nature of the teams was a factor in freeing up CPP to act in the way described here. They do not, in general, have the same 'business' imperatives that an NPO or a project

grant-funded organisation might have. They do not have the same reporting requirements. (This is not, of course, to say they are without pressure or do not have other imperatives and reporting requirements.) Sukhy Johal, Director of the [University of Lincoln's Centre of Culture and Creativity](#) commented at the Development Day that the fundamental difference about CPP for him was that it worked primarily on demand rather than supply, the reverse of the traditional cultural organisation. As described earlier, it also experiences different targets and pressures than some cultural or social interventions or organisations.

The notions of stewardship and servant or service leadership, as developed by Peter Block and others, seems a good fit for much of CPP leadership. There is a consciousness about inadvertently creating dependency and not recognising pre-existing skills. Although words including 'enabling' and 'empowering' were used in interviews, they were usually qualified. Often they were used more in line with [Stella Duffy's recent neologisms 'compower' or 'conable'](#) and her argument that 'we need to stop empowering people', and start doing *with* rather than *for*. CPP directors often described a sense of responsibility for 'bringing people on' or 'creating pathways' in which people could develop. From 'community champion' type roles, through to apprenticeships and formal

or informal mentoring by team members, CPP projects have often focused effort on developing local people as cultural and social activists and, where desired, professionals. Many cite examples of projects becoming independent over time, such as the Ted Hughes Poetry Festival in Mexborough near Doncaster.

There is also, however, a significant stream more likely to characterise itself as 'trailblazing', or 'setting an example'. This is more often done in a sense of exploration through stewardship of communal learning than as individual-driven innovation for competitive advantage and commercial gain. This is another benefit of how CPP was set up as essentially action research, which is multiplied by and in productive tension with the intent to increase engagement and build capacity. Some questioned the extent to which CPP was 'naturally occurring leadership' or an Arts Council construct, but the feedback from consortium members suggests a degree of confidence in the networks' independence.

## 7 Peter Block: Towards stewardship in abundant communities

Peter Block is an American writer, consultant and activist. His work on communities has been influential on my idea of multiplying leadership. At times in this project, I have, instead of a report, wanted to write him a fan letter, or just a single sheet of A4 saying 'Read Peter Block.' Instead I have limited myself to quotations, recommended reading and these two pages to shine a light on his work, which seems highly relevant but too little known in the UK cultural sector.

In *Stewardship* Block sets out why a change from command and control, patriarchal and colonial modes of leadership is needed so communities can find their power. Leaders must choose service over self-interest – related to the idea of servant leadership but not simply that – and embrace the seeming paradox of 'being deeply accountable without choosing to control the world around us.' As he continues, this 'requires a level of trust we are not used to holding.' This has been many people in CPP's experience of working with the community and with artists in the community. It runs counter to the idea of leadership as about control and direction, which when it prevails undermines lasting change.

Block calls for an emphasis on process, on connection as process, similarly to Stella Duffy

of Fun Palaces, and for 'commitment not coercion'. This extends to calling for changes to organisational governance systems he describes as 'based on sovereignty and a form of intimate colonialism... valuing, above all else, consistency, control and predictability'. For Block, defining goals for someone else is patriarchy, which is also fuelled by a need for predictability, ultimately pushing out or distorting purpose. (The point is transferable to what Toby Lowe has called the distorting effects of payment by KPIs/ results, which inevitably leads to gaming the system.)

At the heart of his alternative governance model is partnership. We can see the parallel in CPP's consortium practice. What he calls 'the two most useful questions I know in the search for the alternative to patriarchy' could definitely be heard in consortium considerations: 'How would partners handle this?' and 'What policy or structure would we create if this were a partnership?' There are four requirements for productive partnership in the 'stewardship' model: exchange of purpose (not barter of reward), the right for anyone to say no, joint accountability and absolute honesty with no abdication from the process.

The challenges he identifies to this, given our dominant culture again resonate with the experience of leadership across CPP. For teams, artists and community members alike, the effort of co-creation has at times been difficult because people are so unused to not being in either an 'empowering' or 'dependent' position: 'We often don't know how to have a conversation where neither side is in control. Our training makes us very nervous when we all give up control.' Although Block uses 'empowerment' positively, he is also suspicious of it being seen as bestowed on people: he talks about people assuming both their freedoms and responsibilities and says that 'entitlement is empowerment run aground'.

There is a strong emphasis in Block's work on power and the structures which control and channel it. Having worked with John McKnight, he takes an asset-based approach, as has CPP: 'Stewardship is founded on the belief that others have the knowledge and the answers within themselves. We do not have to teach other adults how to behave.' This asset-based approach must, however, be accompanied by changes in decision-making, governance, allocation of resources and who is amplified and profiled as leading the work.



Block highlights the need for long-term change in ways which resonate for CPP and the cultural sector: 'Service-based governance strategies mean the redistribution of power, privilege, purpose, and wealth. All the team building, improvement teams, and skills training in the world will not create service if the institutional questions of choice and equity never change. This is why organisations have such a difficult time taking advantage of their own successful experiments. It would force them to redistribute power and ultimately privilege.'

Other arguments in *Stewardship* are relevant to how CPP may have been able to work in ways which multiply leadership where others have not, having felt more compelled to address, for instance, business imperatives. Block argues for what Lowe et al would call funding for learning, and for self-definition of purpose and success: 'Having others define for us our accountabilities, measure us against them and pay us in accordance with their measurements creates a culture of caution and compliance. Compliance is the antithesis of the emotional ownership that real accountability means.... Getting better at patriarchy is self-defeating.'

He is also alive to the dangers of what he calls 'soft-core colonialism' where community members are 'enrolled' without a fundamental

shift in governance, 'using participation as a means of getting people to adapt more cheerfully to their helplessness'. This is certainly a danger with programmes such as CPP and some approaches to 'increasing arts engagement'.

At the heart of what I find so relevant to CPP's leadership functions, as well inspiring in a broader sense, is the overall premise set out in *Community: The Structure of Belonging*. I can do no better than quote it:

- 'Build the social fabric and transform the isolation within our communities into connectedness and caring for the whole'
- 'Shift our conversations from the problems of community to the possibility of community'
- 'Connect to a future distinct from the past'

This, it seems to me, summarises what some of the most progressive practices in the cultural and social sector are doing. This includes the best of CPP and of the civic role and 'everyday creativity', the reinvention of some museums as useful community spaces, the expanding role of arts centres in communities and much more, including the strength in practice by D/deaf and disabled people, people of colour, the LGBTQ+ communities and other previously under-represented groups. One common element

which Block writes about powerfully replaces coercion and persuasion – modes of audience development still prevalent in the arts – with an invitation which confronts people with their 'gifts' rather than an analysis of their failings and is relational not colonising. After the invitations comes what Block calls 'the real skill for the leader – the practical application that gets right down to the next meeting with your staff and how to help them contract more powerfully with each other... to create a conversation about what we want from each other.'

To deliver this, everyone must be willing and able to be authentic with each other. For Block this is manifest in every meeting, especially every conversation which could lead to decisions. He brings this down not just to engagement process but to leadership, writing in one article that 'the job is to hold a vision and bring it into every room you enter. Leadership at its best is the use of power to support the human spirit. It's the capacity to initiate something in the world.'

This involves changing our idea of leadership away from the charismatic, heroic model, and to emphasise the citizens who he says create leaders: 'The essential task of leadership is not to be a role model or visionary, it is to engage citizens in creating this future for the commons.'

# 8 Exploring the new world

The report, *Exploring the New World* by Toby Lowe and Dawn Plimmer, and associated work by Collaborate CIC and Newcastle Business School described a Human Learning Systems approach.

The key ideas are that funding, commissioning and managing in complexity involves:

Being **Human** to one another

**Learning** and adaptation must be continuous for improvement

**Systems:** healthy systems create positive outcomes

When a place is working well as a system, these desired behaviours are exhibited by actors across the system, across all the relationships between people in a place:

## Perspective

- People view themselves as part of an interconnected whole
- People are viewed as resourceful and bringing strengths
- People share a vision

## Power

- Power is shared, and equality of voice actively promoted
- Decision-making is devolved
- Accountability is mutual

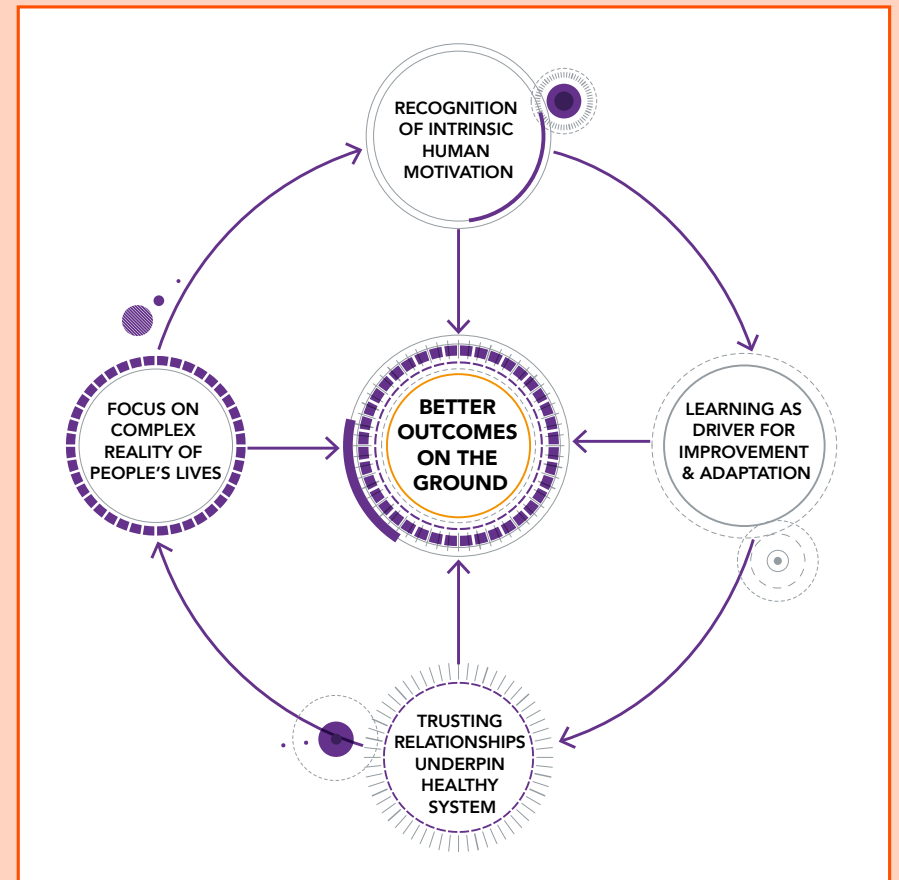
## Participation

- Open, trusting relationships enable effective dialogue
- Leadership is collaborative and promoted at every level
- Feedback and collective learning drive adaptation

## System Stewards

From existing research in this area, it seems to be important that someone (or a group of people) take responsibility for the health of the system. This role has been called 'System Steward' – people who create the conditions in which others can work effectively.

The work builds on an earlier report *A Whole New World* which summarised an approach to change in this graphic.



## 9 Performance and what matters most to the CPP network

This section describes findings from an online survey of CPP staff, consortium members and others such as artists and critical friends. This explored what mattered most from 44 suggested practical skills and behaviours, and how well people perceived their CPP teams and their broader 'place network' were performing in those areas. The key themes which emerge are:

- An emphasis on sharing decision-making power, learning from failure and building trust
- A shared sense across directors, teams, consortium members and others that their local CPP was delivering well against what mattered most
- A shared sense that the local network of leaders delivered less well, collectively

Although it was beyond the scope of this project to conduct public research, I felt it would be helpful to assess views on how CPP leadership delivered against what mattered most to those in the network, as a way, albeit limited, of considering performance against aspiration. This gave some data to correlate with the analysis of interviews when creating the framework described in Section 11, and the various elements of Multiplying Leadership described in Section 13. Although the wording may differ at points, those are rooted in what

respondents described as most important to them, and their reflections on performance. We also asked about how the wider place network of leaders delivered – i.e. those others in the ecosystem, such as leaders of cultural and social organisations, local authorities and others. This would include but not be limited to typical consortium members in a particular place.

The survey was also meant to provide some counter to the pattern in which leadership is described by those who think they are leaders, rather than by those who work with or for those in formal positions of authority. A total of 75 responses were received from 17 directors, 29 members of CPP teams, 22 consortium members and seven others. This is a self-selecting set of responses from the invited group, and may therefore demonstrate limited or biased views. However, the number of responses from consortium members and others provides a degree of 'outside' perspective – or at least views with one foot outside and one foot in. Respondents had the ability, through their work, to compare CPP practice with that elsewhere, for instance.

We analysed the performance rating responses to the ten most often chosen factors to check for any patterns which might show major differences of perception between the different types of people responding, related to

positions, perspectives or potential bias. There was very little difference indeed across the directors, staff team and consortium ratings (0.03 spread on the average rating for CPP leadership by group and 0.07 spread on the average rating for 'place leadership' by group.) In rating both CPP team and Place network, the smaller number of artists and critical friends responding tended to rate slightly higher than other groups. This degree of consistency of view across directors, teams and consortia suggests the composite picture is widely felt. That said, results might be different if, for instance, local NPOs had been invited to comment, so these are not presented as a definitive assessment of actual performance.

The top ten most commonly selected leadership skills, characteristics and behaviours are shown in Table 1, with the % of respondents who chose them. (It is actually 11 as there is an equal tenth.) All 44 elements were chosen at least twice. Respondents were asked to select what matters most: the other things are not necessarily unimportant or irrelevant.

### Leadership Skills

Element	% choosing in top ten
1 Developing community-led approaches including decision-making	56.34%
2 Ability to learn from failure and things that haven't worked as planned or predicted	52.11%
3 Building trust	47.89%
4 Working in collaboration	46.48%
5 Working with multiple stakeholders in the community or place	46.48%
6 Ensuring everyone is working toward core purpose/mission	43.66%
7 Ability to listen	35.21%
8= Creative problem solving	33.80%
8= Creating an atmosphere of mutual respect	33.80%
10= Courage to take risks	32.39%
10= Building positive relationships	32.39%

Table 1 Most commonly selected leadership skills, characteristics and behaviours

This paints a picture which is in tune with, as well as informing, the picture painted in Sections 11 and 13. Community-led approaches including decision-making are central to the leadership aspirations of respondents, with supporting factors including learning, trust, collaboration and risk-taking. The importance of being able to work with others in relationships is clear.

When we turn to how well respondents feel their CPP is performing against the things which they selected, we can begin to see how the broad network self-assesses. (Respondents only gave assessments against the things they identified as most important, which means that those chosen by fewest people may skew high or low in terms of average ratings.)

Table 2 shows that respondents rated performance highly against all the areas which emerged as most important, with all average ratings above 4, so between 'Well' (4) and the maximum 'Really well' (5). 'Developing community-led approaches including decision-making' and 'Working in collaboration' rate most highly in terms of performance in the top ten, and third and fourth in the overall ranking.

### CPP Performance

Most-commonly chosen as important	Performance Rating (max 5)	Performance Ranking (1-44)
1 Developing community-led approaches including decision-making	4.45	4
2 Ability to learn from failure and things that haven't worked as planned or predicted	4.14	17
3 Building trust	4.06	25
4 Working in collaboration	4.48	3
5 Working with multiple stakeholders in the community or place	4.3	9
6 Ensuring everyone is working toward core purpose/mission	4.03	26
7 Ability to listen	4.12	19
8= Creative problem solving	4.22	12
8= Creating an atmosphere of mutual respect	4.17	14
10= Courage to take risks	4	27
10= Building positive relationships	4.26	11

Table 2 CPP performance against chosen elements. Importance ranking based on how often each was chosen by respondents - ie 1=most often chosen, 44 least.

When we compare this with ratings of the how well leadership in the place network is doing, the ratings are consistently lower, although all are above 3, between 'Average' and 'Well'. The lowest rated in terms of performance of the top ten is 'Creating an atmosphere of mutual respect' which may reflect some of the issues around joint working reported to have been identified in research for Arts Council about links between NPOs and CPPs.

Other noticeable patterns in the survey results are:

- Consortium members are more likely to identify delivery against business plan as amongst the things most important to them (40% against 9% staff/directors chose this). They are much less likely to choose 'An ability to cope with uncertainty and ambiguity' but more likely to choose 'Ability to deliver innovative activities and ways of working', suggesting a practical focus for consortium members.
- Staff tend to be more concerned about the ability to tell compelling stories than others
- Staff and consortium members are more likely to choose 'Ability to learn from failure and things that haven't worked as planned or predicted' as important than directors, although this was mentioned consistently by directors in interviews
- When thinking about performance by place networks staff members rated 'Creating conditions for others to excel' lower than directors and consortium members, which may relate to the ecological conditions and the relatively weaker performance in terms of creating an atmosphere of mutual respect. However, these are more wondering and hunches than statistically reliable findings.

### CPP Place network performance

Most-commonly chosen as important	Performance Rating (max 5)	Performance Ranking (1-44)
1 Developing community-led approaches including decision-making	3.5	17
2 Ability to learn from failure and things that haven't worked as planned or predicted	3.25	34
3 Building trust	3.33	27
4 Working in collaboration	3.58	13
5 Working with multiple stakeholders in the community or place	3.72	7
6 Ensuring everyone is working toward core purpose/mission	3.38	22
7 Ability to listen	3.3	28
8= Creative problem solving	3.71	8
8= Creating an atmosphere of mutual respect	3.14	37
10= Courage to take risks	3.33	26
10= Building positive relationships	3.6	11

Table 3 Place performance against chosen elements. Importance ranking based on how often each was chosen by respondents – ie 1=most often chosen, 44 least.

# 10 21 thoughts from interviews with CPP directors

- ‘Talking to people is how to get things done – get your coat on and get out there.’
- ‘The biggest challenge has been having to let go of some notions or versions of quality I had – it was hard but I had to hand over control anyway.’
- ‘Arts background has trumped management skills. You need to get out of the arts leadership comfort zone, of which CPP has elements.’
- ‘Being managed badly previously meant I wanted to manage well. I saw it’s a lot of work leading like an arsehole.’
- ‘You have to absorb a lot of anxiety to be calm and reassuring.’
- ‘Targets work against being responsive and accountable – but the consortium board were nervous about the lack of targets.’
- ‘We’re about shifting an ecology not building organisational or cultural capital – that’s not ethical or useful right now. It’s unethical to make work about how it is without thinking how tomorrow could be.’
- ‘Though we’re not about solving the world’s problems, people want value for money and large-scale work can seem a bit distasteful in light of cuts to services.’
- ‘I take having fun seriously, and to have fun you have to be yourself, and bring all of yourself to the task.’
- ‘You have to sit with the job never being done.’
- ‘I didn’t think I could be the director I’d seen other people be.’
- ‘There’s the pressure of being invited to every meeting about every thing and every event. It’s hard to say no. But my job isn’t going to meetings.’
- ‘This is the most stressful job I’ve ever had – I think it’s the weight you carry doing community work.’
- ‘What are you trying to prove and who are you trying to prove it too?’
- ‘Having joint directors was completely liberating – it enabled ambition and scale, using a broader set of experience.’
- ‘We don’t go in with ‘this is the way it’s going to happen’.’
- ‘You have to resist the urge to try and fix everything.’
- ‘Exercise and drink help!’
- ‘There’s a fine line between confidence and arrogance in being your authentic self.’
- ‘Reducing funding and community demand create pressures and stress. It’s been heart-breaking to lose staff.’
- ‘We take the mickey and laugh a lot.’

*(These are not all verbatim quotes but paraphrases.)*

# 11 A framework for multiplying leadership practice:

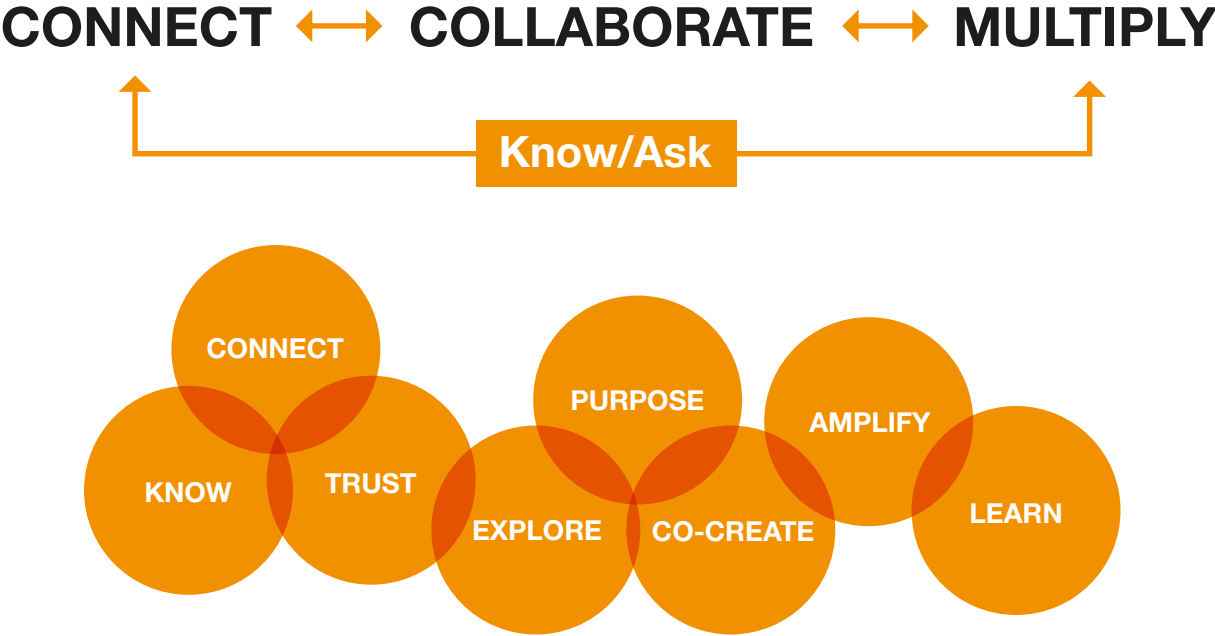
A difficulty with frameworks is they elide a diversity of ways of doing things, boil a panoply of qualities into a smooth soup of cycles or lists. They can make the difficult seem manageable – or turn the bleeding obvious into buzzwords. They can make the messy seem linear – or in avoiding that become confusing. What follows may fall into all those traps, but it attempts to sum up the main patterns of CPP leadership practice described in the previous section.

What is most interesting to me about CPP leadership is not so much the individual skills but the collective practice. The first question for the potential leader should not be ‘How do I do this?’ or ‘What skills do I have to do this?’, but ‘How do we do this together, and how do I behave to help that happen?’ What follows then builds on individual skills and ways of working, especially how each uses some of the elements described in the next section. But this practice is done collectively and collaboratively.

The framework below can be seen as the attributes of a healthy culture or system as much as that as those working within it. It is a synthesis based on my view of what I have found through the interviews, survey and connecting CPP approaches to other styles and models.

Multiplying leadership is more a process than a programme or a set of skills, competencies and behaviours, but it is not a linear one. Although the eye naturally seeks lines and circles, reality will mean many loops and steps back and forth between the elements described below. Connection is necessary

for collaboration, and then for amplifying what’s done and learning from it, but it can also flow from that collaboration and reflection. Leadership happens in time, and takes time: putting it on the page can make it look static, but it is fluid.



The leadership approach can be summarised as being rooted in activities which:

- **Connect** people and ideas
- **Collaborate** and co-create with people through exploration of shared purpose
- **Multiply** the visibility and awareness of the effect, range and diversity of people involved, and also the collective learning from experience
- **Know** the self, the community and the context and **Ask** useful questions

The elements of this practice are as follows. There is a recursive pattern here: arguably these elements apply to how the consortium works, to the programme team, to work across localities or neighbourhoods, and to work in the place as a whole, as an ecosystem. The pattern also applied to how new 'leaders' have been involved, developed and supported.

**Know:** The process begins with knowing the place and the community. This is often enhanced by local people being involved in the team. It also includes knowledge of self and organisational values and mission.

**Connect:** Implicit in the multiplying leadership framework is that when people connect, ideas come, agency is taken and change happens. Much of contemporary life and economics

serves to separate rather than connect, so a key leadership function for CPP, as in many other community to social cultural activities has been to bring people together and facilitate discussions of assets, needs and ambitions.

**Trust:** Out of connection, when it is done thoroughly and in a safe and open way, can come trust. Trust is the basis for much else in multiplying leadership, as it is in all healthy workplaces. The dividing leader places more of an emphasis on compliance and contract than trust, to illustrate by way of contrast.

**Explore:** A part of CPP leadership practice has been exploration of possibilities, rather than rushing to conclusion, target or KPI-driven activity. This has been difficult and frustrating for some stakeholders who are impatient for change or results. It has, though, tended to allow space for unusual suspects, for people to learn along the way, and for new, more co-created, even innovative, solutions to emerge.

**Purpose:** Although CPP has had its 'exam questions' set by the Arts Council from the beginning, in terms of increasing arts engagement, providing excellence of process and product, strengthening community engagement approaches, and identifying what has been learnt, each CPP consortium has had to find its own purpose, out of mutual exploration of needs and possibilities. This has

been replicated at project or locality level.

**Co-create:** Co-creation is both a principle and a practice which has emerged with ever-greater clarity over the lifetime of CPP, alongside examples in other cultural practice, it must be emphasised. It has become an important aspect to decentralising and democratising movements in culture. It can take a range of forms and depths and is increasingly applied across networks.

**Amplify:** CPP has been about making things happen. Sometimes these have been big festivals and outdoor events, attracting tens of thousands of people. Sometimes they have been workshops and community events for small numbers of people. What the different approaches have had in common has been the amplification of voices and ideas, of community identity and history, and of pride in a place. Sometimes the messages have been challenging, but these disruptive proposals have been crucial to change.

**Learn:** CPP is an action-research project, and has been funded as such. This is healthily in line with the recommendations of Collaborate CIC to fund learning not outcomes. Reflective learning is seen as key to all CPP Places, and to their leadership work. Learning connects to all the other areas of this framework, leading to new and different approaches each time.



This is a framework for leadership practice which involves more than just those in formal positions of authority consulting others: it is collaborative and more collective. This leads some interviewees to argue that leadership was not the best frame for their work. Essentially, I have retained the word to contribute to the discussion of what leadership in socially engaged culture might look like. It also relates to definitions as leadership as that which leads to change.

One problem referred to above is that many frameworks concentrate on leadership by individuals, no matter how connected or collaborative. The frameworks are often implicitly individual/first person singular. However, these could be reframed into the first person plural. For instances, the Clore Leadership and Clore Social models could be reinterpreted as below.

### Clore Leadership

#### First person singular ('I')

#### First person plural ('We')

##### Know yourself

We know our communal/collective strengths and weaknesses

##### Build relationships

We can work together to find shared purpose, making the most of our differences

##### Be responsible

We take collective responsibility

##### Innovate and embrace change

We can do things differently and embrace positive change

### Clore Social

#### First person singular ('I')

#### First person plural ('We')

##### Inspirational communicator

We are able to communicate well between ourselves and enthuse others

##### Empowering enabler

We are able to draw out the skills and abilities of all of us, so everyone feels confident to act

##### Focused strategist

We are able to find the best way forward to achieve common purpose

##### Passionate advocate

We are able to tell our story and generate support

##### Generous collaborator

We are able to work together generously

##### Courageous changemaker

We are able to make changes with bravery

The Multiplying Leadership framework is designed in reverse: from the collective activity of multiplying leadership must be drawn the individual skills and responsibilities necessary. Elements which might form part of these, and questions for individuals are set out in Section 13.

# 12 Dividing leadership: The opposite of multiplying leadership?

I had a colleague who argued that for an organisation's value to have real meaning in practice there had to be a viable, reasonable alternative, that someone else might choose. So, whilst some might, for instance, say they believed in partnership with audiences as a value in arts engagement, someone else might believe in supporting an artist who paid no attention to their audience, only to the work. I want to highlight some things about multiplying leadership by painting a lightly fictionalised version of an opposite: what I will call dividing leadership. (Liz Wiseman contrasts the 'multiplier' leader with the 'diminisher', but I feel this lacks the suggestion of control.)

Dividing leadership and dividing leaders believe in, or act as if they believe in, the efficacy of some of the following:

- Separating their private-self and their values and beliefs entirely from their work-self and the decisions they make as a leader.
  - The functionality of silos and specialisms working to clear briefs with precise deliverables.
  - Centralised hierarchies of decision-making, using consultation mechanisms to involve others where necessary.
  - A focus on KPIs and measured results, including payment/assessment by result.
  - Clear chains of command and roles and responsibilities in terms of delivery.
  - Managing expectations of autonomy depending on scale and seniority.
  - Contractual relationships with external partners.
- Performance appraisal against KPIs and to encourage compliance more than development.
  - Accountability only via their own organisational reporting structures and agreed targets.
  - Delegation as a factor of status rather than efficacy or equity.
  - Restrictions of access to information as related to place and status rather than contextual.
  - Pass/fail approaches to performance.
  - Development as addressing weaknesses.

# 13 53 elements of CPP leadership practice

This section describes individual elements that might form part of CPP leadership practice at its best, themed around the Multiplying Leadership practice framework: connect, collaborate, multiply, plus a fourth of know/ask which underpins the different parts. (There is also a 'joker' added.) This deliberately large set is a device for setting out my own synthesis, based on patterns in what emerged from interviews, survey and research as key skills for more collaborative open leadership practice. Part of the argument is that multiplying leadership requires a set of skills which cannot be held by one person, at least not at any one time.

I present this very wide set of things deliberately, as it feels reductive and prescriptive to boil this set down further. Too many of the frameworks I have read suggest too great a level of uniformity in individuals: in reality no single person, team or place will be working with all 53 elements. They may, though, each combine them in different ways, depending on personality and context, and at different times. The elements are a mixture of things to do, things to be, consider or ensure, ways of being and relating to others. Each has a brief description of how this might be applied, or how it has been embodied in CPP at its best.

You might read this section straight through, or you may find it helpful to look for factors which you think most relevant to your own practice. The elements are listed in Table 4 below. Section 19 is a set of questions related to each element, intended for practical use by individuals or teams.

Connect	Collaborate	Multiply	Know/Ask
• Know	• Steward	• Amplify	• Of/By
• Human	• Community	• Multiply	• Authority
• Connect	• Care	• Let go	• Power
• Disrupt	• Failure	• Mentor	• Story
• Share	• Diversity/ Difference	• Distributed	• Learn
• Listen	• Purpose	• Powerful	• Joy
• Host	• Empathy	• Relational	• Proportion
• Consortium	• Co-create	• Incremental	• Vulnerability
• Trust	• Time	• Messy	• Who
• Identity	• Generous	• Reflect	• Patience
• Honest	• Who	• Decision	• Ecosystem
• People	• With-in	• Status	• Committed
• Curious	• Open	• Voice	• Frame

**The Joker: Paradox**

Table 4 53 Elements of Multiplying Leadership

## CONNECT

### Know

Many leadership frameworks suggest that self-knowledge is crucial for the leader – understanding your own values, motivations, preferred styles, strengths and weaknesses, and observing how you affect others. Knowing and understanding communities you are working with and in is important – this may include demographics but more importantly it will, over time, need to include the people and associations, formal and informal, that connect communities. On a simple level, getting to know a wide range of people – not just the usual suspects or those in formal positions of authority – is crucial to multiplying leadership.

### Human

One former CPP director described to me that when they saw the ‘human-centred design’ process, connected to CPP by The Audience Agency, she felt ‘Yes! I didn’t know what I was doing before but now I know what I’m doing and want to carry it on.’ The importance of being people-centred and connecting to people on a human level, with empathy, is central to multiplying leadership as it helps strip away the effects of hierarchy and power.

One director described it as the opposite of ‘corporate’. When people connect as humans, rather than job roles, especially positions of authority, different conversations can become possible. Understanding yourself and others is key.

### Connect

As described elsewhere, this is one of the more basic building blocks of Multiplying Leadership. When people connect with each other, they share ideas, skills and come up with new ideas. They explore similarities and differences. They can become a community, a team, a squad, friends and colleagues. Connection influences results, be it for a work team, an organisation, or a community. E.M. Forster famously wrote ‘only connect’. The Multiplying Leader would go on to encourage those connections to become networks, collaborations and partnerships.

### Disrupt

The tech-capitalists are fond of ‘disruption’, and there are some in the CPP network not keen on the word. But for others, especially those with backgrounds in community development and diversity, for whom changing the dominant norms has been important,

the word is still valuable. With its roots in changing systemic patterns of statistical arts engagement, CPP has been exploring how best to disrupt those patterns, while delivering a duty of care to individuals and groups. This is the partner in paradox of ‘connect’.

### Share

A central plank of CPP practice as a whole has been enabling community decision-making by sharing power. Power must be shared to multiply leader, as well as time, attention, resources. The spaces for exploring needs, challenges and ambitions through conversation and co-creation need to be ones that people of all kinds can share.

### Listen

The power of active listening is not so much in gathering information but in ensuring everyone feels heard. Feeling heard can be a rarity in lives which lack authority and power. Communities can feel ignored, or patronised. For many, seemingly cash-rich projects like CPP need to prove their sincerity before they can be trusted. That starts with listening. It continues with listening to everyone involved in the co-creation.

### Host

Margaret Wheatly has recently written of a shift in the leader's role 'from hero to host'. I chose to emphasize the verb rather than the noun, to suggest that hosting is something everyone in a place or system needs to do. The care necessary to hold open a space in which people can come together is that of hospitality. (It also often involves food.)

### Consortium

Consortium working is increasingly common in the cultural and social sectors, not just in CPP where it is structured in by Arts Council guidance. Developing shared views, ambitions and action plans is therefore a core skill. Consortium working also loosens the control over what is done, although every member should retain the right to say no. What happens if we see all work as part of a consortium, formal or not?

### Trust

Trust has been central to the achievements of CPP, and has been a vital component of its leadership role. Trust within teams, consortia, communities, and with artists and audiences must be continually built, can be easily lost. Trust enables dialogue, exploration of ideas and co-creation. Trust can trump fear or risk.

### Identity

Identity can be limiting and liberating. Adopting more open, collaborative leadership does not mean you, your organisation or your programme should lack identity. Representation of different identities within communities can be important, meaning the leadership should be representative of the full diversity of the communities. It may be important for identity to be visible, through the diversity of your leadership team or group. Different identities expressed through shared exploration and purpose don't cancel each other out: they multiply possibilities.

### Honest

When working collaboratively in communities there is need to avoid dissembling, resorting to management-speak euphemism, over-promising and leading people on. This can mean being frank about the limits of possibilities as well as their extent, about resources available and the pressures and context of your work. Being honest encourages others to get involved. It also relates to what I have elsewhere called one-to-one accountability of leadership. Put simply, can you look people in the eye?

### People

People is probably the word used most often in this document. It is deliberately non-specific at times, as CPP leadership approaches tend to resist categorising people. Connecting people as individuals, or individuals coming together as a group, rather than slotting them into types, seems more conducive to collaborative effort. It is also a useful reminder that 'leaders' are also 'people', with the baggage and variety that implies. Multiplying leadership is an in-person art, not one of paper strategies, so is absolutely about people coming together.

### Curious

Multiplying leadership is driven by questions more than answers. Those working in this way are curious about people and their situations, needs and ambitions. Being curious leads to connection and exploration. It is also, of course, a common trait of artists and creative people.

## COLLABORATE

### Stewardship

Peter Block, as described elsewhere, calls for an emphasis on stewardship rather than leadership, for service over self-interest. Lowe and others point out the important role of ‘system stewards’. The word suggests care, and the creation of structures and pathways. Many of the gifts of a good event steward – welcome, care, understanding, skill, knowledge, face-to-face interpersonal skills – apply equally to those in other forms of leadership. A lesson from CPP might be that the more you reject the tag ‘leader’ the more likely you are to multiply leadership and make other leaders.

### Community

Community is at the core of CPP leadership, especially enabling community decision-making. Arguably each work team, workplace, or organisation is also a community of a kind. Acknowledging difference as well as commonality within communities of place and interest is important within leadership. The multiplicity of communities a single ‘leader’ or programme may be part of is also a complicating and enriching factor. Core is

finding structures in which more people in communities can take part in leadership.

### Care

Working in communities of any type, anyone active in leadership has a duty of care to those they work with and for. They also have a duty of care to their team and themselves. It is also important to build leadership around what matters to people – what they care about.

### Failure

Research tells us there is a lot to be learnt from failure, and arguably even more to be learnt from the small failures within broadly successful activities or projects. Habits of after-action review, including a range of perspectives, are important to failing well, as is absolute honesty. Some failures can be catastrophic though. Failing better doesn’t mean risking lives.

### Diversity

If everyone can play in the leadership space with practice, it is vital that this means everyone. It needs to be more diverse than now, in all ways – more women, more people of colour, more people who identify as LGBTQ+, more working-class people, more

disabled people, more neuro-diverse people, a wider range of ages: more people whose life experiences and ways of thinking differ from each other. If collective, distributed leadership is not ‘diverse’, then it isn’t collective or distributed. CPP has a long way to go in this respect in places, but is part of the effort.

### Purpose

There is no genuine collective leadership without purpose. Only managers with ‘big cheese’ job titles can provide ‘leadership’ without purpose. For the collective, the key question, eventually, after a process of trust-building and exploration, is likely to remain, ‘what do we want to do together?’ Agreeing shared purpose does not mean giving up your private or individual values and driver, but finding a common way to achieve them, alongside individual effort.

### Empathy

It is important to be able to understand others’ motivations and experiences, ‘to imaginatively enter into what life is like for them’ as one person put it. This helps find common ground, explore potential and bring others into the leadership conversation. It is also important to audience-focused leadership. On the flipside, a lack of

empathy is a common problem for 'heroic' leadership styles. It can be challenging but necessary for CPP and the cultural sector in general: 90% of those in the sector voted remain. Twenty out of 21 CPP Places voted leave.

### Co-create

You multiply leadership when you make something together on a genuinely equal footing. When you take two views and make a third. When you find a way to co-create, using everyone's skills and not holding decision-making centrally. In CPP and other settings that means putting the artists in collaboration with the so-called participant or community member, each respecting the other's skills, history and identity.

### Time

Leadership is not static, nor a one-off act. It ebbs and flows over time. The skilled practitioner learns the rhythms of an organisation or a project – the meetings, the decisions, the strategising or review moments – and how the pace of activity may change. This is vital to personal resilience – knowing when to renew energy and when to spend it – especially when working in groups. Sometimes picking up the pace can help multiply

leadership, but you need to build in reflection and 'warm-down' time too. There is never enough time is scarcity thinking: the most exciting leaders apply abundance to time too and see what happens.

### Generous

You have to be generous to multiply leaders: you have to invite, offer, not hold your cards close to your chest. The kinds of people applying this approach to leadership give without bartering for specific return. They mentor, they give support, they listen. You can be generous with time, commitment and insight even when you have little money or space.

### Who

Who gets involved in leadership matters, and is influenced how processes are structured. CPP has involved local people through a range of methods and to varying degrees. Who is employed matters, and the diversity of backgrounds matters – for the messages that sends as well as the quality of discussion and decision. Who is in the room, and who is not in the room also matters. Historically some people have been kept outside. CPP is among those changing that.

### With/In

The kind of leadership found in CPP works with people in their communities. It stands with them. It is in or within them. It leads not from the front at all times, but always from within. It does not bring or bestow power, assets or creativity but reveals, finds and uses what is there already, often unsupported previously, sometimes even expressly ignored or discouraged. It starts being people with people in a place and asking why and what if and works out from that to specific aims.

### Open

Open is an important word for multiplying leadership. It reflects the spirit required of individuals, a state of mind. It should also describe the networks active in leadership, and the working partnership they create. Communication too should be open rather than partial and privileged towards some. The system should welcome diverse and challenging perspectives without closing ranks. It is also worth remembering that open questions often illicit the deepest reflection.

## MULTIPLY

### Amplify

An important part of Multiplying Leadership is providing a platform for talent from all parts of the system, giving credit to those who've played particular roles, whether they are funder, 'stakeholder', or others. The advocacy work should centre on amplifying the voices and perspectives less heard in the dominant narratives. In practice this can mean leaders stepping back to let team members front activities, as well as leading behind the scenes.

### Multiply

The way in which you carry out your leadership role can help others become active in leadership – by creating structures and spaces, by generating opportunities for leadership for others, by building confidence. This may mean taking up less space yourself. It could, though, lead to greater change, more diverse and equitable processes etc....

### Let go

Working in more of a stewardship may mean letting go of some dearly held habits. Some directors described initial discomfort at letting

go of artistic control – even programming work they didn't really like, against much of their training – in order to reflect community need or the results of co-creation. Most fundamental may be the necessity of letting go of the idea that single leaders can provide all the leadership necessary for healthy creative communities.

### Mentor

Every leader should see themselves as a mentor to individuals and to the culture they want to flourish. This means being generous with time, experience and insight, based on a deep knowledge of themselves, including of whatever privilege may have helped them reach their current position. Mentoring should avoid simply shifting 'boys club' benefits from one group to another though, but seek to multiply the range of people active in leadership.

### Distributed

In CPP-style leadership, and to multiply leadership, decision-making and power need to be distributed through the system and the communities of a place. As Sue Hoyle commented, the ability to build consensus is crucial when working in the less-common

distributed model, particularly when tough decisions need to be made. Not just decisions but conversations, dialogues and partnerships may need to be decentralised. For those in formal positions of authority this may mean asking questions more than providing answers/decisions.

### Powerful

This may be a surprising word, or not. I choose it over 'empowerment' or 'empowered', to avoid the sense of power being bestowed by some benevolent being to the less fortunate, who will henceforth be 'empowered'. I want, instead, to focus on the power that resides in all of us when engaged in or with leadership. It is used in the sense of 'power with' or 'power to' rather than 'power over'. It connects to the basis of democratic practice.

### Relational

Building relationships has been identified as a key cultural leadership skill. Relationships are seen as vital to systems – the system is defined by how different parts relate, or not. As academic Joe Raelin identifies, leadership as practice focuses not on the relationship between leaders and follows but at the interactions, connectivity and adjustments



made in the ongoing activity of everyone involved. People in relation create leadership for and with each other across groups, types and power dynamics.

### **Incremental**

The leadership approach seen in CPP and elsewhere is about change rather than delivery of status quo outputs and outcomes. Multiplying leadership is not linear, nor is the change it provokes, which may come in fits and starts – it will be incremental, but not necessarily always progressing in a single direction. The incremental chart of progress is more likely to be a zigzag than a rocketing arrow or a staircase.

### **Messy**

Living with messy, clumsy solutions is the essence of tackling wicked problems and living with complexity. Do not expect leadership approaches that seek to multiply leadership to be as tidy as patriarchal control approaches. As Frances Patterson says: 'It can seem blurred and confusing. It makes sense to some and not to others.' The trains may not always run on time. Relish what that might bring. You may need to explain 'mess' to others less comfortable with it.

### **Reflect**

To play a part in collective leadership, there must be time to reflect. This might be individual reflection, about purpose and performance, and the effect of your leadership. It can also be powerful to reflect together about patterns, change and how the collective is working. It is important to involve as wide a range of informed perspectives in that as possible. Having a critical friend or coach to the collective has been useful to many CPP projects.

### **Decision**

Although I found at least one reference to 'decisionless leadership', in general it is accepted that decisions need to be taken. Indeed, many lists of the traits of great leaders include 'decisiveness'. However, in a collaborative context it is important to shift that to either more collective decision-making or decision-making involving genuine input by many people. CPP has even passed on some decision-making traditionally held by artistic directors to community panels and groups. (Not without discomfort for those involved.) Giving up total control of decisions can be liberating: even in less collaborative, more hierarchical contexts, formal leaders tend to be expected to make many more decisions than really necessary.

### **Status**

Multiplying leadership means erasing hierarchical notions of status. These are sometimes so deeply ingrained in us we don't realise they are there. Status makes itself known by limiting conversations, by limiting expectations and through who is given a platform. It can also be reflected in how credit is given. Multiplying leadership works on the basis that status is illusory or where given irrelevant to collective effort.

### **Voice**

Although multiplying leadership is shaped by faith in a decentralised, collective or distributed model of leadership, each person or organisation involved will naturally and healthily bring their own voice to that. It is important to understand yourself, and your strengths and weaknesses to use that voice well. It is also important to use your voice to encourage others in their leadership, and sometimes to stay silent, rather than drown them out. (This applies especially to those whose voices have dominated previously, typically older white males.)

## KNOW/ASK

### Of/By

Nina Simon connects of and by in her new organisation Of/By/For All. I suggest using them together might be useful for multiplying leadership. She argues that ‘if you want to be FOR your whole community, you have to be representative OF them and co-created BY them. To involve people in meaningful, sustainable ways, you can’t just make programs FOR them. You have to involve them in their creation’. It will require you to multiply leadership, giving people power and confidence rather than concentrating those crucial factors into positions of authority.

### Authority

Authority is a complicating factor when multiplying leadership. It can be vested in certain positions and roles as part of the managerial system core to many dominant ideas of leadership. Control often goes hand in hand with a chain of command. However, these may need to be respected in context, or may stem from specialist roles – e.g. someone in a safeguarding or event management role. The notion of leadership ‘beyond authority’ has been spread, by among others, Common Purpose founder Julia Middleton, who connects it to networks and systems.

### Power

The kind of cultural and social leadership described here exists in a society where power concentrates, and in structures which tend to privilege white, male, middle and upper-class backgrounds. Power gets in the cracks: it is distinct from Authority. It is, in an odd way, not the root of the word ‘powerful’ when applied to communities, but the opposite, its blocker. But what the most inspiring people in leadership do is shine a light on power and create structures so everyone that wants to can tap in and contribute to it, rather than pretend it doesn’t exist.

### Story

Multiplying leadership is often based on the ability of the convenor to tell a story others want to join in with. They create newly possible worlds, or versions of the world, finding structures and asking questions that allow us to add to it. They communicate convincingly, but leaving enough space for others to believe themselves needed. They may or may not be charismatic advocates themselves, but they join with others to make stories that reflect many voices, including those sidelined by dominant structures of culture and politics.

### Joy

CPP directors often talked about the importance of joy in their work. This comes from the people they work with achieving something, from the artworks created, and from the process of making programmes and events. Several teams talked about the importance of laughter, of collective leadership being a joyful practice, not a dutiful one. The work may be challenging at times, but just as ‘high challenge’ can be productive paired with ‘high support’, it can also be combined with ‘joyful’ to good effect.

### Proportion

In discussions of healthy leadership, some directors identified proportion as important. The word suggests a sense of proportion – not blowing things out of proportion – but also a kind of harmony when things are in proportion. The work should be big, but not too big, manageable but not too easily manageable. There is also an elegance suggested by proportion, a paying of attention to things in their proper scale and order, which leadership beyond command and control requires. (Yes, this may sit paradoxically with ‘messy’.)

### Vulnerability

Brené Brown has written several books on the importance of vulnerability and courage to leadership. She argues that fear of vulnerability stems from a scarcity culture that encourages shame, which in turn undermines personal bravery, ultimately undermining both innovation and human connection. This applies at personal, organisation and community level. All involved in collaborative leadership need courage to step forward in each act, each meeting, each decision, each opportunity to connect or to learn. Brown argues practising vulnerability helps.

### Learn

CPP is framed as an action research project. As well as seeking to make a difference to communities, and to levels and range of arts engagement and creative expression within them, it has sought to learn from the experiences, from the failures and from the people involved. It has implicitly adopted a 'human-centred design' technique which includes learning from test activities. The ability to learn, and to encourage learning in others is a key leadership skill.

### Process

Multiplying leadership is not a programme of activities or actions but an ongoing process and practice. It is something you do, rather

than something you become, although you can become better at it, and you will need to draw on what you are. It is not always a straightforward, predictable process but more iterative and exploratory. It is helpful, though, to think about starting points, feedback loops and learning cycles within collective leadership, and to understand interactions as processes which are part of larger patterns.

### Patient

Those working towards social change, including CPP directors, often describe a tension between the urgency of change and the time needed to build trust and make that change sustainable. The need to be patient while maintaining momentum and keeping focus on change is often cited. Resisting the temptations of short-termism, with immediate gains but long-term damage or waste, and of complacency is vital. Sometimes people take time to assume their freedoms and responsibilities, and those involved in leadership need to be patient.

### Ecosystem

Each community or place can be viewed as an ecosystem, with connections, feedback loops and unexpected, non-linear outcomes. This may be an ecology of place, artform, culture

or a mixture. As Gross et al say: 'Ecological leadership is likely to require the ability to build partnerships in ways that combine both flexibility of membership / involvement and clarity of purpose: such that, regardless of the ebbs and flow of funding, relationships last.' It is important to acknowledge the conflicts and interdependencies implicit in the notion of ecosystem, and to work towards ongoing health rather than stability as a goal in itself.

### Committed

Being part of collective or distributed leadership, bringing others, even many others, into leadership does not mean you need to be any less committed to your values and mission. Multiplying leadership does not barter to get compliance as more managerial approaches do. It commits to something and invites others to do so. It is passionate in its collaborations, and in how it seeks shared purpose for everyone.

### Frame

When working in a distributed and collective way, a key role for leaders is to help the collective frame and reframe its issues and thoughts. This is most often done by asking questions rather than by providing new solutions. CPP has often helped people look at places and problems differently.

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## The Joker: Paradox

Paradox is something more than the ambiguity created by complexity. Sometimes those aspiring to leadership must live with paradox; contradictory truths or realities which cannot be resolved or denied. Some say that's where the truth hides, some that it's what stimulates the best thinking. It is implicit in the improvisatory art of saying 'yes and...' It also lives near the egos of collaborative leaders.

# 14 Healthy leadership – CPP suggestions

The research brief included consideration of ‘self-care and well-being’ and the impact on individuals of leadership within CPP. This section includes a list of ‘top tips’ from the CPP network, and those attending the Development Day which may be useful for individuals.

There are three key overarching points to highlight.

Firstly, this work can be hard. Some CPP directors felt it was the most stressful role they had ever had, although others felt CPP was less complex than running a venue-based organisation. The responsibility to communities was felt by many and those involved in Phase 1 of CPP especially had felt a weight of expectation, pressure and at times criticism upon them that was burdensome. One director described this as ‘the weight you carry’. Several described feeling ‘burnt out’ at times. The way in which funding has tapered over the phases has meant a series of reorganisations of staffing, part of the fluidity of CPP certainly, but often meaning staff leaving or reducing hours, which has not been easy for those involved. Managing relationships within consortia and in communities has also taken a large amount of emotional energy for some.

Secondly, well-being in leadership should be based on designing and maintaining healthy workplaces and ways of working, not on individuals modifying themselves or their lives to fit in with unhealthy systems. Some CPPs very clearly reject that model of expecting individuals to get better at coping with the unreasonable. Reflective time, coaching approaches and flexing work to peaks of activity are common. Heart of Glass have counselling and supervision, given the amount of disclosure involved in their work, and have reshaped the week so people can work at home on Fridays to ‘process’ the week’s work better. Getting the environment, funding, team, time right were commonly mentioned in interviews as crucial.

Thirdly, almost all directors interviewed mentioned the importance of the national peer learning network. This was described variously as ‘like a therapy session to combat isolation’, ‘joyous and hard work in equal measure’, ‘help from people who know what you’re doing and going through’, ‘reflecting collectively, a sense of ‘in it together’. One director said that ‘generous colleagues in network have been key to my mental health.’ This chimes with findings in the work by Lowe and Plimmer on Human Learning Systems, which says ‘peer

support often plays a crucial role in giving leaders a sense of ‘collective bravery’ to develop and persevere.’

### Ten top tips

1. Boundaries, boundaries, boundaries (and set an example about observing them).
2. Reflect with a critical friend, coach, action learning sets or peer groups.
3. Work on open and appreciative communication style within teams.
4. Rituals, celebrations, affirmation and gratitude for work done.
5. Work flexibly, reflecting the rhythm of your activity.
6. Have a no blame/positive error culture.
7. Remember to reconnect with the art.
8. Get outside – fresh air and exercise.
9. Practise laughter and forgiveness.
10. Use your off switch.

I want to conclude this section with why I think this matters, for the cultural sector and for place-based community and cultural development.

Firstly I think it shows that ‘funding for learning’ can free organisations and consortia to lead in a wider range of ways than sometimes possible in more target-driven settings, or in increasingly income-generation-centred business models, and that this can, at its best, lead to a wider range of people getting involved effectively in systems leadership. Changing the pressures makes a difference. It may create new unwelcome patterns too, such as longer timelines or more ‘failure’ than can be tolerated. I also do not want to suggest CPP has been without targets. The consortium structure has been helpful, despite its challenges, in relieving what one might call ‘everyday business’ pressures.

Secondly, CPP has at times acted as a proving ground for a generation of leaders leading in progressive ways, and will do so more in the future. This includes current staff, but also participants, artists and partners and people who have moved through CPP to roles elsewhere – the ‘alumni’. Those alumni interviewed were unanimous in describing CPP as a foundational experience without which they could not do their current roles, or not as well. They reported valuable experience of

‘holding the space open’ for others, working in complex situations, resilience, and learning how to share decision-making.

This ‘cohort effect’ could be significant in the long-term or prove to be just an interesting blip in people’s careers. In 20 years, will CPP be seen as part of a movement changing the norm or as a temporary break from the norm, from the pressures of commercialisation, economic regeneration and creative industries narratives, or from publicly-funded ‘charitable culture’? Will it be a fond story of early career for established leaders, or will they continue to be influencing through multiplying leadership with everyone they work with? The answer may depend on the extent to which the challenge of CPP and others – a broad nascent movement encompassing Creative Civic Change projects, Co-Creating Change, other networks connecting to the civic role, Fun Palaces, 64 Million Artists, everyday creative and cultural democracy activists, organisations such as Slung Low, the Future Arts Centres network and many others including long-established community arts organisations – is met with resistance or indifference by other modes of cultural leadership, those based on supply and control over demand and commitment.

A ‘multiplying leadership’ approach challenges deeply ingrained, dominant ideas about accountability and control. Does the buck have

to stop at one person’s desk? Maybe not. Maybe that idea reflects deep patriarchal and managerial structures, even when it’s trying to be helpful. Maybe any business or group would be stronger if we all acted as if the buck stopped with us. And maybe, just maybe, the evidence from CPP increasingly asks, that would mean more people become involved in or simply enjoying arts activity?

CPP has had some success in encouraging new views of what arts and creative engagement looks like, and in getting more people to start with the public or community views of culture rather than their own. It has also been successful in attracting people who have not engaged regularly with the arts to get involved. CPP is not unique in this, but part of a progressive movement you can see all over the UK, of people developing and modelling leadership in more productive ways than archaic, heroic, individual-centred models. How far the collaborative, distributed model can take over from control, targets and ego may depend on our collective ability to multiply leadership in the next decade.

It does not feel quite right to end this paper with a traditional-looking set of recommendations for the CPP network, or for funders or other parts of the ecosystem. I will end with five very brief 'implications' for anyone reading this paper, including myself.

- If this model of multiplying leadership as demonstrated by CPP is at all accurate, it offers a way of describing a leadership practice that may be valuable to others working in broadly the same more inclusive, less hierarchal direction. It should be shared alongside other models of leadership to encourage debate, adoption, adaptation, variation, refinement and dissenting models to emerge.
- If this analysis holds true, funders and partners would be missing out if they did not consider what role they could play in multiplying leadership, how they could live and operate by the same principles in order to be more relevant and open to communities, and how best to change their governance and decision-making processes accordingly.
- The alumni of CPP, including staff, participants and activists, should be tracked or come together on a regular basis for as long as they find it useful. Being collaborative leaders they don't need their purpose defined for them.
- The models of leadership development programmes need to be more hybridised and open to a multiplying leadership approach, challenging the least useful aspects of heroic, individual-focused, leader-centric development. More collaboration between providers and more place-based work would seem logical.
- We all need to think who we could connect and connect to, who we could collaborate with and how we could multiply the leadership of others in our day to day work, rather than adding to or hoarding our own power.

**What other implications do you think there are?**

# 17 The main argument on one sheet

## CONTEXT

### Social

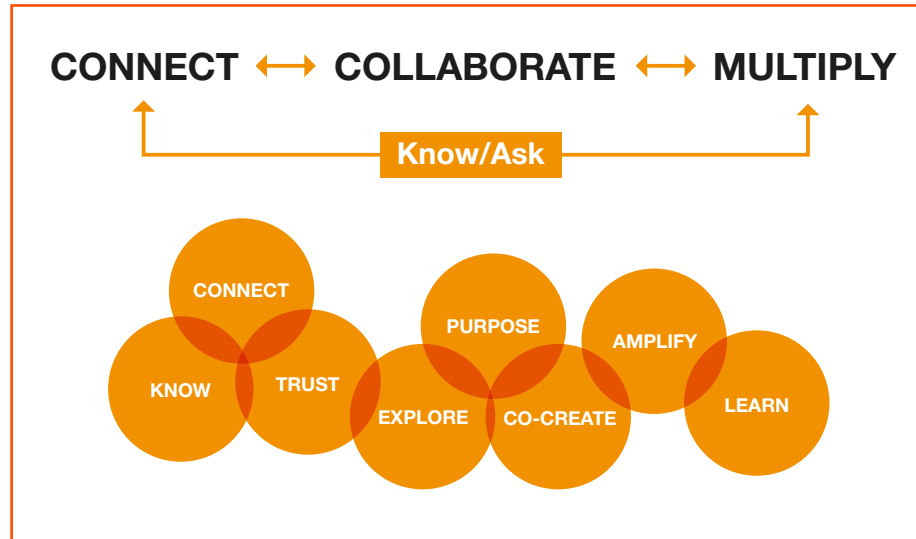
- Asset based community development
- Power, accountability, connection and trust
- Collaborative working

### Cultural

- Leadership for resilience, reach and impact
- Running an organisation and distributed, collective models
- Leaders (development of skills, capabilities and behaviours) and leadership (development of relationships, partnerships, structures for working together)
- Questions of purpose, inclusion, power and control

### Broader

- Systems thinking and complexity
- Questions and openness
- From control to stewardship – anti-patriarchal, decolonized models



*The fundamental contribution of CPP in Places has not been to **add** to infrastructure or arts engagement in so-called ‘cold spots’ but to **multiply** leadership within the community and systems active in Places that are rich with people and ideas by building trust, being open and positive, and sharing control. Multiplying leadership means more people becoming confident in leadership work, but it also means vastly more connections between people that creates more collaborative, less patriarchal structures for informed decisions, action and learning.*

#### n. Multiplying Leadership:

*an open, collaborative style of working with others which tends to decentralise and flatten authority, bringing many more voices into leadership and decision-making than typical hierarchical structures*

#### ger. Multiplying Leadership:

*the act and art of connecting potential leaders to each other in clear, productive structures so that everyone involved is active in the leadership of an organisation, project or community*

## CPP

### What matters most

1. Developing community-led approaches including decision-making
2. Ability to learn from failure
3. Building trust
4. Working in collaboration
5. Working with multiple stakeholders in the community or place

### CPP leadership approaches

- Say Yes And
- Consortium working beneficial
- CPP as ecosystem leadership
- Place and politics
- Gender and diversity benefits
- Challenging leadership models
- Leadership and failure

### So what

- Learning model beneficial
- Cohort effect potential
- Challenging dominant models
- A decentralising movement drawing in new people
- Connect, collaborate, multiply the leadership of others



# 18 Leadership approaches: recommended reading

This is not a bibliography – links are provided to the writing referenced – but to suggest some reading that was particularly helpful to me in contextualising CPP leadership and may be useful to others working on multiplying leadership.

**Sriwatha Batriwala:** [Feminist Leadership for Social Transformation: Clearing the Conceptual Cloud](#)

**Peter Block interview:** [Restoring humanity in our communities and institutions](#)

**Peter Block:** *Stewardship*

**Peter Block:** *Community: The Structure of Belonging*

**Peter Block and John McKnight:** *The Abundant Community*

**Sarah Boiling and Clare Thurman:** [Mapping and analysis of engagement approaches across the Creative People and Places programme](#)

**Brené Brown:** *Dare to Lead*

**Maddy Costa:** [Leading the Way: HEY 100](#)

**Stella Duffy:** [Here's Why We Need to Stop Empowering People](#)

**Jonathan Gross and Nick Wilson:** *Creating the Environment: The cultural ecosystems of Creative People and Places*

**Jonathan Gross and Nick Wilson:** [Towards cultural democracy](#)

**Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation:** [What Would Joan Littlewood Say?](#)

**Sue Hoyle and King's Culture:** [Changing cultures: Transforming leadership in the arts, museums and libraries](#)

**Sue Kay and Katie Venner, ed:** [A Cultural Leadership Reader](#)

**Emmy Kell:** [10 Tips for Making Collaborative Leadership Work](#)

**Graham Leicester:** [Rising to the Occasion Cultural leadership in powerful times](#)

**Toby Lowe and Dawn Plimmer:** [Exploring the new world: Practical insights for funding, commissioning and managing in complexity](#)

**Gerri Moriarty:** [Community Arts – a Forty-Year Apprenticeship: A View from England](#)

**Mark Robinson:** [Faster But Slower, Slower But Faster](#)

**Peter Senge, Hal Hamilton and John Kania:** [The Dawn of System Leadership](#)

**Dr Cathy Sharp:** [Collective Leadership: Where nothing is clear and everything keeps changing](#)

**Chrissie Tiller:** [Power Up](#)

**Margaret Wheatley:** [Leadership in an Age of Complexity](#)

**Evelyn Wilson, ed:** [Reflections on Resilience and Creative Leadership](#)

**Liz Wiseman:** *Multipliers*

**Workforce Scotland:** [Collective Leadership: The power in beginnings](#)

## Websites

### **Abundant Community:**

<https://www.abundantcommunity.com>

### **Civil Society Futures:**

<https://civilsocietyfutures.org>

### **Inquiry into the civic role of arts organisations:**

<http://civicroleartsinquiry.gulbenkian.org.uk>

### **Clore Leadership (NB research by fellows)**

<https://www.cloreleadership.org>

### **Clore Social Leadership:**

<https://www.cloresocialleadership.org.uk>

### **Co-creating Change Network:**

<http://www.cocreatingchange.org.uk/>

### **Creative People and Places (OurLearning section):**

<http://www.creativepeopleplaces.org.uk>

### **Creative Civic Change:**

<https://localtrust.org.uk/other-programmes/creative-civic-change/>

### **Collective Leadership:**

<https://workforcotland.com/workstream/collective-leadership/>

### **Museums and Resilient Leadership**

<http://www.museumresilience.com>

# 19 Multiplying Leadership practice cards/questions

The CPP Leadership Practice 'cards' contain questions for those involved in leadership to use, relating to the 53 elements set out in Section 13 of the main report. Some may be useful in group contexts too, with the 'you' shifting from singular to plural in meaning. A second joker includes some questions to start that CPP teams have found useful.

These questions can be used as reflective or coaching prompts for self or team, picking elements which feel particularly relevant for you to explore.

You might try some of the following:

- You can print these out and laminate each card.
- Pick a card at random and consider the questions.
- Allocate the cards between a group of people to reflect typical strengths or ways of working and then pick some to explore.
- Shuffle the cards and give each person in the group a hand of up to five cards. They can then choose which to share and ask the group to help them reflect on the questions.
- Find the card that makes you most uneasy and consider the questions.

- If considering an area of your work, think which elements of multiplying leadership are most relevant and consider the questions.
- After answering the questions, a useful 'closing' question is 'So what does this mean I should do, stop doing, or doing even more or better?'

Users should obviously feel free to adapt the language, add their own cards and make up their own games and exercises.

A free pdf of the cards - with backs - is available to print out from the [Creative People and Places website](#).



**v. KNOW**

What do you know and understand about yourself and your skills, style and impact?

What do you know and understand about the people and communities you work with?

Who do you know that should be involved in your work? (And who don't you know, yet?)



**v. CONNECT**

Who could you connect?

Who could you connect with?

Who are you already connected to with whom you could do more together?



**v. SHARE**

How might you share power, in practice, and with whom?

What values, vision or ideas do you share with the person/people you disagree with most often?

What do you find most exciting/hardest about sharing?



**v. LISTEN**

How well do you practise active listening – checking meaning, playing back, paying full attention?

Who are you listening to?

How do you respond to what you hear?



**adj. HUMAN**

What does being human with others mean to you?

How much are you bringing as much of your whole self as you would like to your leadership?

How do you treat people like human beings, not types or demographics?



**v. DISRUPT**

What do you want to disrupt?

What's the most helpfully disruptive thing you could do, or work with others to do?

Who or what do you owe a duty of care during any disruption?



**v. HOST**

What kind of coming together could you host?

What are the key attributes of the gatherings you would like to host?

What's your main duty when hosting in a leadership context?



**n. TRUST**

How can you build trust with those you work with, or would like to?

When do you feel least trusted, and how could you change that?

Who or what do you not trust as much as you would want to?



**n. IDENTITY**

Who are you and what do you stand for?

What identity does your collective leadership portray?

How can you best express your identity through collaborative leadership?



**adj. CURIOUS**

What do you want to know more about relevant to your leadership activity?

What's your favourite question when part of a leadership group?

How could you use your curious mind to multiply leadership?



*adj.* **HONEST**

What does honest mean for your leadership?

When did you last fudge something and why?

How do you encourage others to be honest with you?



*n.* **PEOPLE**

What people are you missing in your work ?

What do you value about the people you work with?

How do you treat each person you meet as an individual?



*n.* **CONSORTIUM**

What do you want out of any current consortium or group work?

What can you help others achieve by working together?

What might you say 'no and...' to?



*n.* **STEWARD**

To what greater cause or community than your own do you feel accountable?

What authority do you have you can pass on or share with others?

How can you encourage commitment without control?



*n.* **CARE**

To whom do you have a duty of care and how are you fulfilling it?

What do you care about most?

What do others involved in leadership with you care about and what does that mean for you?



*n.* **FAILURE**

What can you learn from your most recent failure?

What's the failure hidden within your most recent 'success', and what does it teach you?

How can you encourage others to be comfortable with failure as a learning process?



*n.* **PURPOSE**

What do you want to do together?

How clear do you think everyone involved in leadership is about your purpose?

What are you not prepared to give up in committing to a shared purpose?



*n.* **EMPATHY**

Who or what do you find it hardest to empathise with?

What do you think are the drivers behind the behaviour of others active in leadership with you?

What would others say about your leadership style?



*n.* **COMMUNITY**

Which communities do you feel part of or accountable to?

What structures, activities or spaces would help more community members be active in leadership?

How do multiply leadership within your communities?



*n.* **DIVERSITY**

How different are the people in your leadership circle from each other?

How representative of your communities are those active in leadership?

How you can amplify the voice of someone who the dominant culture might exclude, including your own?



*pro.* **WHO**

Who is your work for?  
 Who is not in the room?  
 Who would you most like to join you in your leadership?



*adj.* **OPEN**

How recently did you invite someone new into your network?  
 How do you respond to challenge?  
 What could you do to share with others how you prefer or need to work?



*prep.* **WITH/IN**

How can you get more people involved with your leadership in your place?  
 Who is not currently with you that could or should be and how could you encourage them in?  
 What was your most exciting experience of being with/in a community?



*n.* **TIME**

What are the rhythms you need to pay attention to?  
 How much time have you got (e.g. for your leadership ambition, or plans)?  
 What would you do if the time you have was enough time?



*adj.* **GENEROUS**

What do you have or know you could share or give others to bring them into leadership?  
 What examples do you have of generosity towards you?  
 What have you done this week others would describe as generous?



*v.* **CO-CREATE**

Who had agency or control in your most recent project?  
 What did you find exciting the last time you co-created something?  
 What do you find hardest about working with others to co-create?



*v.* **MULTIPLY**

How could you make space for someone else?  
 How many other leaders have you helped become active?  
 How effective are the structures and spaces where distributed leadership happens?



*v.* **AMPLIFY**

Whose voices could you amplify to make sure they don't get ignored or drowned out?  
 Which stories do you need to amplify?  
 How could you amplify the voices of others doing leadership work alongside you?



*v.* **MENTOR**

What experience or insight do you have someone else could benefit from?  
 What would you want to learn from being a mentor?  
 How could your mentorship multiply leadership?



*v.* **LET GO**

What story do you tell most often than you would benefit from letting go of?  
 How confident are you that others will care for anything you let go?  
 How does it feel to let go of the illusion of direct control?



*adj.* **DISTRIBUTED**

What decisions you currently take could be made by or with others?

Where does power need to be in the system for it to work better?

How can leadership be distributed more equitably and transparently?



*adj.* **POWERFUL**

What power do you have you are not using, or not well enough?

How could you help others involved in leadership find their own power?

When do you feel at your most powerful?



*n.* **VOICE**

What does the way you communicate say about you?

How can you communicate your purpose and values without drowning others out?

What other voices could you encourage?



*adj.* **INCREMENTAL**

How quickly do you need change?

How much time, energy and freedom have you got for winding staircase progress?

How do you describe change or impact to others?



*n.* **STATUS**

How differently placed in their hierarchies are the people you trust most?

How often do you think of your status or perceived status?

Are some of your colleagues in leadership more equal than others?



*adj.* **MESSY**

How much discomfort can you and those you work with bear?

How do steer through uncertainty?

What questions help you and others understand your experiences?



*n.* **DECISION**

What decisions do people come to you for they could make themselves?

How can you support others involved in leadership to make good decisions?

What decision would you most like to hold onto?



*adj.* **RELATIONAL**

How would you describe the relationship of your work to that of others in your communities?

How would you describe your relationships with others active in leadership in your system?

What kinds of relationships do you prefer?



*v.* **REFLECT**

What kind of leadership have you modelled for others lately?

How have you encouraged others to lead?

What do you (individually or collectively) need to do differently?



*prep.* **OF/BY**

What communities are you part of and which communities are part of you and your work?

In what ways can you ensure your work those communities?

What leadership can be of/by your creative communities?



*n.* **POWER**

How does power shape your actions?

What power would you like?

What has power ever done for you?



*v.* **LEARN**

What have you learnt recently?

How widely have you shared what you learnt?

Who are you already connected to with whom you could do more together?



*n.* **JOY**

What made you feel joyful in your leadership most recently?

How can you encourage others to be joyful?

How can you highlight joy within your collective leadership?



*n.* **PROPORTION**

What feels out of proportion for you right now?

What do you sometimes just have to let go?

How do you encourage others to be honest with you?



*n.* **STORY**

What story do you want others to join in with?

What is your role in the story?

If your story had a twist in the tail, what would it be?



*n.* **AUTHORITY**

What formal authority do you hold and how do you use it?

What informal authority would others ascribe to you?

When have you best provided leadership 'beyond authority'?



*adj.* **PATIENT**

What or who are you currently trying to rush?

How long can you wait for the results you are working on?

What are you doing while you are being patient?



*v.* **FRAME**

What question could you ask that would help someone, or a group, see their own thinking differently?

What are the frames that you hold to most dearly?

Which of your own issues or ambitions could you look at through a different frame?



*n.* **ECOSYSTEM**

How would you describe the main ecology you play a leadership role in?

What is your role in that ecology?

What could you do to most positively influence the ecology?



*n.* **VULNERABILITY**

What happened last time you showed how vulnerable you felt?

How can you encourage others tap into your collective courage?

If nothing could go wrong what would you do?





*n.* **PROCESS**

How do you use your skills and strengths to multiply leadership?

What aspects of leadership practice have you got better at lately?

What have you learnt lately?



*adj.* **COMMITTED**

Who or what are you committed to?

What's at stake for you in this leadership context?

How do you best express your commitments through leadership?



*n.* **PARADOX**

What is the paradox you feel most in your leadership work?

What paradox would you most like to solve?

What paradox are you most attached to?



*v.* **START**

What have we got we could use?

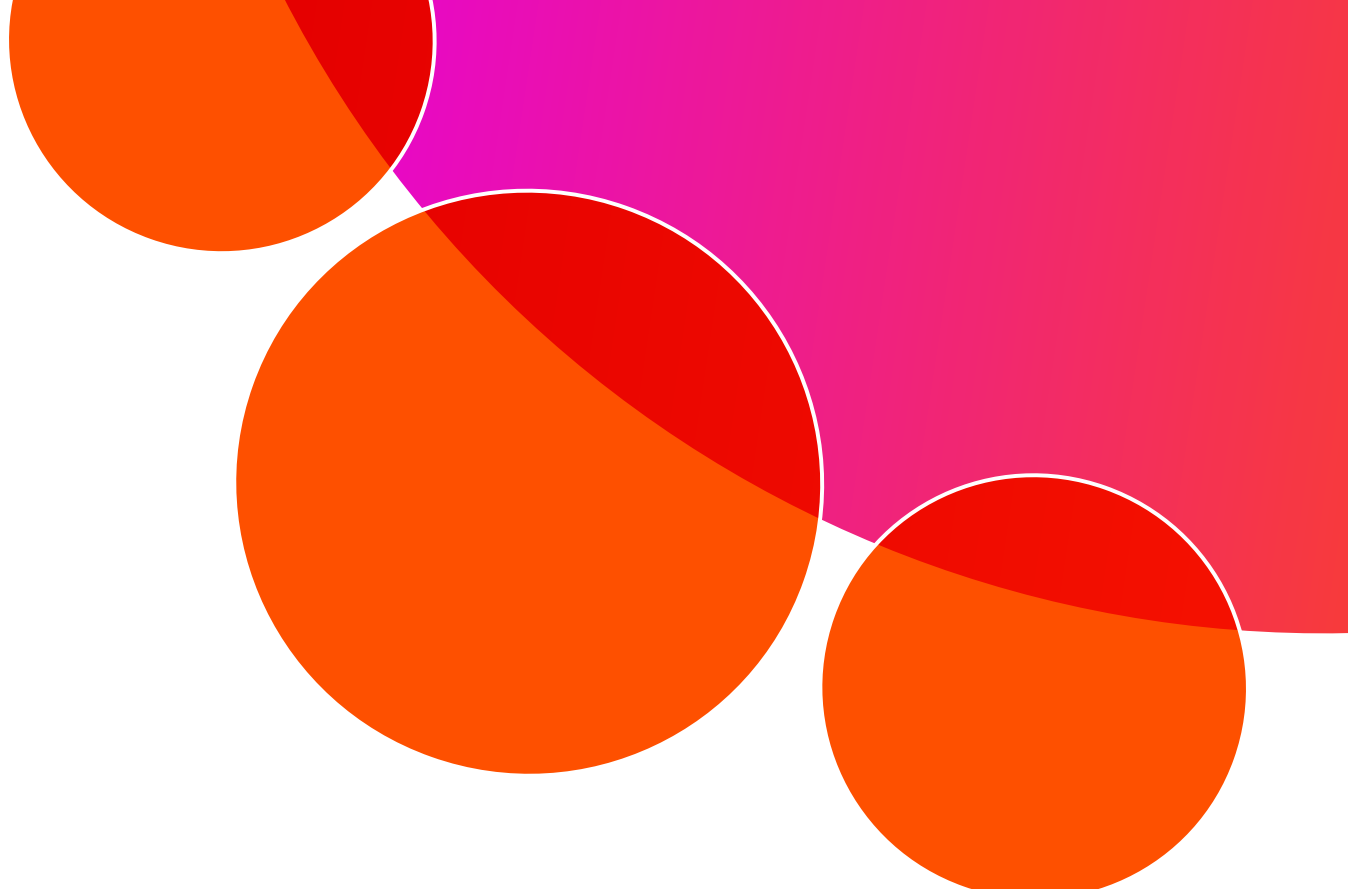
What are we good at here?

What is our history?

What do we most need?

Who is here?

What do we need to do?



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