

Leadership Programme that creates succession, skills development and enables positive leadership transitions across the sector

Overview

A series of Leadership change strands designed to enable a proactive, dynamic and supported transformation of representation at the tops of our cultural organisations to better reflect the audiences and communities that these charities exist to serve. We recognise that different organisations have different views on the urgency and ease of leadership change and this portfolio approach is designed to reflect that;

1. Proactive transitions
2. Succession through development
3. Distributed Leadership
4. Re-centring artists
5. Making movement

1. Proactive Transitions
 - a. Enabling proactive transition by leaders who want to move aside or make way for new leadership perspectives (including retirement/emeritus type interventions)
2. Succession through development
 - a. Supporting organisations to create a 'next wave of leaders' programme that creates opportunities for-under represented voices and equips people for leadership (including talent development and positive action schemes)
3. Distributed Leadership
 - a. Supporting organisations that want to invest in distributed leadership – empowering more people within the organisation and restructuring how decisions are made and with/by whom (including restructures, upskilling and change management initiatives)
4. Re-centring artists
 - a. Supporting organisations that want to re-centre creative power around artist's voices and insights
5. Making movement
 - a. Supporting boards that have decided that change needs to happen at a leadership level in order for the mission to be delivered, and might need additional guidance to implement their intentions

We propose to create a series of support packages and interventions that will enable change across the sector. At this moment we need to shift from declaring good intentions and socially progressive concepts to concrete plans and developments that are grounded in reality, linked to diarised specificity, supported with resources and overseen by trustees to ensure momentum and impact, not simply wishful thinking.

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Unpacking the models

1. **Proactive Transitions** - Enabling proactive transitions by leaders who want to move aside or make way for new leadership perspectives (including retirement/emeritus type interventions)

There are leaders across the cultural sector who are ready to hand over, but the roadmap for enabling that at this time is not clear and this leads to additional inertia and an unintended sense that progression is intentionally blocked. A clearer roadmap and set of resources to support proactive transitions would be useful.

We see that the support that needed here could include:

- Templates and semi-structured conversations for Leadership teams and Board/Leadership teams to have to set objectives, surface implications, create a timeline, engage the wider organisation in the conversation
 - Models and formats for managed constructive transition
 - Models and formats for emeritus type structures and relationships (especially for founders?)
 - Financial guidelines related to retirement settlements
 - Job design and restructure support to explore new models that might be better than like for like replacement
 - Recruitment support
2. **Succession through development** - Supporting organisations to create a 'next wave of leaders' programme that creates opportunities for under-represented voices and equips people for leadership (including talent development and positive action schemes)

Where organisations are confident that their current leadership incumbents are right for the future, many are still extremely aware that the leaders who will take over those positions need to come from a broader demographic and lived experience if the organisation is going to make work that is relevant to a wider range of audiences and communities. Some additional guidance and development support would enable momentum to build in this area.

We see that the support needed here could include:

1. Models and formats for positive action programmes
2. Support with R&D to understand the existing challenges for 'next wave leaders'
3. Training and Development advice to support the building of Development programmes
4. Recruitment support to engage with widest range of under-represented candidates
5. Peer support programmes to bring together likeminded organisations to enable shared learning

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3. **Distributed Leadership** - Supporting organisations that want to invest in distributed leadership – empowering more people within the organisation and restructuring how decisions are made and with/by whom (including restructures, upskilling and change management initiatives)

Many organisations are seeing that a strictly hierarchical leadership model does not empower individuals, reduces agency from across a range of perspectives and does not align with their mission to generate more inclusive practices and impacts. There are no established roadmaps for this kind of transition and some accepted practices would support change.

We see that the support needed here could include:

- Culture Change and Organisational Development support
- Process redesign support
- Skills development programmes
- Peer support programmes to bring together likeminded organisations to enable shared learning

4. **Re-centring artists** - Supporting organisations that want to re-centre creative power around artist's voices and insights

There are many cultural organisations who are reconsidering the relationship that they have with artists – noticing the detached nature of this from their side. Artists themselves have been made even more acutely aware of this disparity during covid and are committed to seeing change. Audiences, communities and organisations would benefit from a deeper and more fundamental relationship with artists.

We see that the support needed here could include:

- Artist engagement and inclusion work – listening to understand concerns and conditions required for engagement
- Culture Change and Organisational Development support
- Process redesign support
- Skills development programmes
- Peer support programmes to bring together likeminded organisations to enable shared learning

5. **Making movement** - Supporting boards that have decided that change needs to happen at a leadership level in order for the mission to be delivered, and might need additional guidance to implement their intentions

There are organisations that are led by incumbents who should be encouraged to move on and make way. Some of these are founders, others don't bring the skills, perspectives or practices that the organisation now needs in order to be relevant, representative and thus

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resilient for the future. Where boards have identified (or would identify if there was a concrete process that they could engage with) that the organisation should be exploring new leadership, some established guidance and road mapping would be useful to support them through this conversation with confidence. It would also assist trustees to explore these questions in ways that are fair, respectful and legal.

We see that the support needed here could include:

- HR advice and toolkits
- Guidance to support to hold 'without prejudice' conversations
- Job design support
- Culture Change and Organisation Development support
- Peer support programmes to bring together likeminded organisations to enable shared learning once change has been implemented
- Financial guidelines related to retirement settlements

Partnership and funding

- people make it work is currently seeking constructive conversations with organisations that might have expertise to contribute or resources to support the development and delivery of this programme of work.

Operational considerations

- We imagine that this programme of work would be managed and delivered by people make it work
- We imagine that this work would need funding support from numerous national funders and bodies
- We imagine that people make it work would build a partnership of organisations who have the expertise to deliver particular elements of this programme
- We imagine that some/many of the organisations that we could support with this programme would also need direct financial support to fund the development activity/recruitment activity/exit agreements etc. from their regular funders.

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