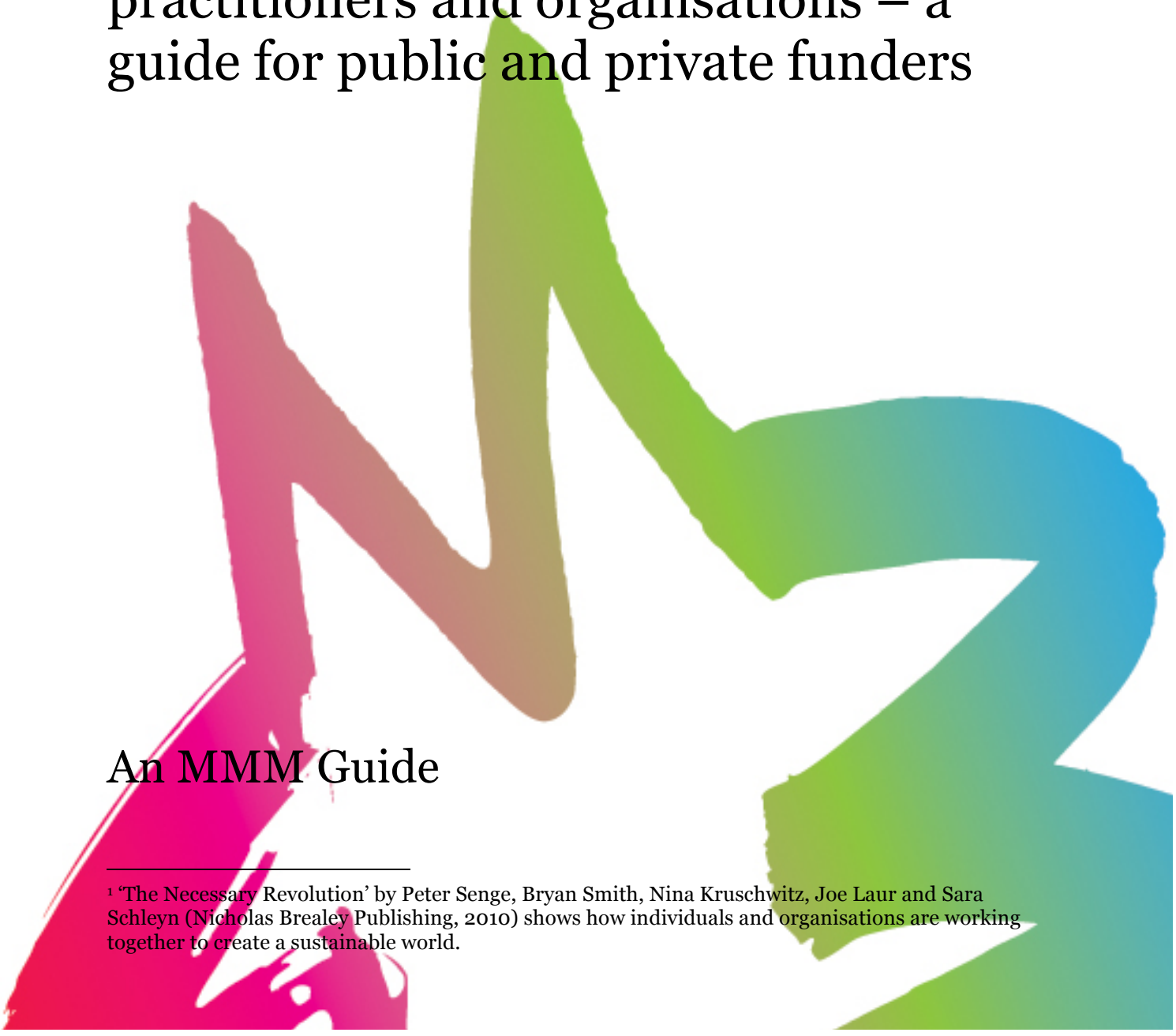
# Fuelling 'The Necessary Revolution'[1]

## Supporting best practice in collaborative working amongst creative practitioners and organisations – a guide for public and private funders



An MMM Guide

[1] 'The Necessary Revolution' by Peter Senge, Bryan Smith, Nina Kruschwitz, Joe Laur and Sara Schleyn (Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 2010) shows how individuals and organisations are working together to create a sustainable world.

# Acknowledgements


## “Every collaboration helps you grow” Brian Eno

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**Clare Cooper**
**Co-Founder and Co-Director of Mission Models Money (MMM)**

## About Mission Models Money (MMM)[2]

Taking its name from the three interdependent elements which not for profit arts and cultural organisations need to keep in balance to ensure sustainability, MMM asks the questions 'what can be done to deepen understanding of the challenges facing our mission-led arts and cultural organisations' and 'how can we best ensure that artistic and cultural endeavour thrives in the UK in the 21st Century?' Starting as a conversation between Roanne Dods, then Director of the Jerwood Charitable Foundation and Clare Cooper, then Director of Policy and Communications at Arts & Business, the programme began with two conferences in 2004 and 2005, where delegates identified key issues critical to the development of greater organisational and financial sustainability. A third phase followed from 2005 to 2007 comprising an action research programme and campaign for change, which established a body of literature summarising the key challenges and proposed a series of recommendations. Substantial funding was raised for a fourth phase, 'Designing for Transition' (Deft), the aim of which was to respond to the recommendations by designing and delivering a series of pilot interventions in Scotland and England relating to mission, model and money. One of these was a set of 'collaborative working' pilots, and it is from the lessons learned through these pilots that the guidance given here has been prepared.

Funded by a diverse range of public sector agencies including HM Treasury, leading corporations and innovative foundations, two approaches have been crucial to MMM's success. First, it has been independent and sector-led; and second it has taken a highly collaborative open approach which recognises that knowledge can be created and shared in ways that emphasise its character as a common good, rather than as something to be owned. Acknowledging that peer to peer support and mutual problem solving is key to addressing common challenges has been a relatively new way of working in the sector. This highly empowering process has now involved thousands of individuals and organisations as direct participants and partners, a core group of Directors and Associates, and an expanding knowledge network made up of some of the most experienced people in the sector.

[2] www.missionmodelsmoney.org.uk

## About the Author

Clare Cooper is a Co-Founder and Co-Director of MMM and is leading MMM's current phase of work. She has had an extensive career in arts management, which started with the British Council in 1981. From 1991 to 2003 she specialised in fundraising with a portfolio of diverse clients. In 2001, she joined Arts & Business, first taking the role of Director of Development and then becoming the first Director of Policy & Communications. She left A&B in 2005 to set up the third phase of MMM. She has served as a Trustee on the Boards of a number of arts organisations and higher education institutions over the past fifteen years and now focuses her volunteering in broader community settings. She was born and brought up in East Africa and currently lives and works partly in Scotland and partly in London.

# Contents

## Page


1. Introduction

2. Organisational structures for collaboration

3. Competencies, qualities and attributes required for collaborative working

4. Disciplined collaboration

5. Early stage challenges in collaborative working

6. The role of Technical Assistance (TA)

7. The values created by successful collaboration

8. Assessing healthy collaboration

9. Funder strategies to encourage collaborative working

10. Conclusion

Bibliography

Appendix 1: Pilot funder testimonies

Appendix 2: Invitation to participate

Appendix 3: Summary of MMM's Collaborative Working Pilots

# 1. Introduction

## "We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny."[3]

**Martin Luther King**

As the 21st century unfolds, we are facing perhaps the most perilous time in human history. Rising human population and our single-minded focus on the kind of growth that increases financial wealth and material consumption means we are living well beyond the planet's current capacity to regenerate itself. It's not just climate change that is threatening us. Fifteen out of twenty-five of our major ecosystem services are in decline. We are literally running out of planet[4].

These huge global forces, as well as those closer to home in the UK such as the unprecedented squeeze on public services resulting from the 2008 global financial collapse, are bringing new realities swiftly to the fore, redefining our priorities and our values in the process. The growing pressures that these new realities will bring mean that social as much as environmental innovation, and the new values from which they spring, will have a central role in enabling our societies to adapt and thrive. How can we prepare for the transition from an industrial growth society to what will have to be a more life-sustaining civilisation? And, if creative and cultural expression is recognised as a value-forming activity, can the arts become a driving force in the critical task of forging those new values and shaping the innovations that will enable us to become a life-sustaining species? The social systems thinker Peter Senge believes that what we are witnessing is nothing short of total revolution[5]: "History talks mostly of political revolutions, dramatic events that all too often represent little real change over the long term: But occasionally something different happens, a collective awakening to new possibilities that changes *everything* over time - how people see the world, what they value, how society defines progress and organises itself, and how institutions operate. The Renaissance was such a shift, as

[3] King, M.L. (1963) Letter from a Birmingham Jail, 16 April

[4] Mckibben, B. (2007) Deep Economy, One world

[5] Senge, P. et al (2008) The Necessary Revolution, Nicholas Brearley Publishing

was the Industrial Revolution. So, too, is what is starting to happen around the world today." He proposes three core capabilities[6] that will enable us to navigate this 'change of age': firstly, the ability to see the larger systems of which we are all part; secondly the ability to recognise the unprecedented level of interdependence that characterises our world and to foster collaboration across every imaginable boundary; and thirdly the ability to move from a reactive problem-solving mode to creating futures we truly desire. This, he says, requires a level of commitment, imagination, patience and perseverance far beyond what happens when we are just reacting to problems.

## Collaboration and connection

This guide focuses on the second of those core capabilities – collaboration, and the increasingly important role that collaborative working is playing and will need to play in enabling creative practitioners and organisations to 'rise to the occasion' and fulfill their potential of becoming one of the driving forces of our future post-industrial, ecologically literate age. If innovations are created from new connections in our minds,[7] then a greater number of successful collaborations in the arts will help fertilise those new connections and enable alternative ways of seeing and being, leading to the co-creation[8] of a different kind of growth, the kind that will increase the cultural and creative vitality of our communities.

MMM's own action research[9] has uncovered evidence of and insight into the value of good collaboration. Efficiencies and/or cost savings are usually the goals most cited for collaboration, especially since the 2008 global financial collapse. But more profound and, perhaps in the longer term, more consequential value can emerge through the shared learning of good collaboration; trust that leads to deeper relationship and exchange of ideas; new combinations of energy that help incubate new knowledge and responses.

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[6] Ibid

[7] http://timkastelle.org/blog/2010/06/seeing-things-differently/

[8] http://www.iasdr2009.com/m42.asp

[9] Mission Models Money (2007) Towards a healthy ecology of arts and culture

This research has also shown that, whilst artists have a proud and promiscuous history of collaborating across every imaginable boundary, arts and cultural organisations have too often tended to work in isolation or in competition. As a result, there is significant unrealised potential for arts and cultural organisations to leverage their own talents and those of other organisations by working together on developing mergers, back office consolidations and joint ventures. The over-extended and under-capitalised nature of the sector, "with too many organisations trying to do more things than they can possibly do well, with both human and financial resources too thinly spread."[10] suggests that releasing this potential is a priority. But whilst some arts organisations have shown an interest in developing collaborative working practices around back office functions and in programme areas such as education and learning, experience has been limited and there has been little shared learning of current practice.

The extensive literature that exists on the practice of collaboration in both the non-profit and for-profit sectors tends to reflect on three recurring themes. Firstly, good collaboration is hard and when it works it amplifies strength, but poor collaboration is worse than no collaboration at all[11]. Secondly, good collaboration often requires competencies, qualities and attributes (CQAs)[12] that are not commonly observed in many executive leaders, (although they may be nascent rather than absent), but without these, they will not learn how to develop the systemic thinking they need to tackle the increasingly complex problems they face[13]. Thirdly, knowing how to evaluate opportunities for collaboration, spot the barriers to collaboration and tailor collaboration solutions are prerequisites for building the capacity for resilience.

[10] Ellis, A. (2004) New ways of sustaining the arts in the UK, Mission, Models & Money

[11] Hansen, M.T. (2009) 'Collaboration', Harvard Business School Publishing

12 MMM's 'People Theme' research proposes that the concept of skills is a limited one, and suggests the adoption of a more holistic concept – that of competencies, qualities and attributes. In management theory, 'competency' is understood as a capability that goes beyond knowledge skills and abilities into values, motivation and characteristics, and should lead to superior performance in the 21st century environment. Many of those involved in MMM's research in the early stages had a much more limited understanding of the term and had negative responses to it as a dry impersonal managerial concept. To counter this, MMM included the terms 'qualities' and 'attributes', which places further emphasis on the holistic breadth of ways of being and doing.

13 Senge, P. et al (2008) The Necessary Revolution, Nicholas Brearley Publishing

## MMM Collaborative Working pilots

Against this backdrop, the 2008-2010 pilot schemes[14] which formed the fourth phase of MMM's work[15] included a set of collaborative working pilots, through which the insights gleaned from its earlier research findings could be further explored. Armed with varying degrees of experience in collaborative working, six groups of arts and cultural organisations[16] in Scotland and the North East of England embarked on a two-year journey with MMM. Their joint destination was to reach a point where they could tell six powerful stories of successful collaboration, to give route-maps and courage to other creative practitioners and organisations and, as importantly, offer reflections and guidance to public and private funders in order to encourage them to invest more widely in collaborative working practices. Despite early cynicism and skepticism from some quarters, MMM was fortunate to secure support for the pilots from a group of early adopters from the public and private funding community [17]. The role of funders – encouraging and supporting collaborations, consolidations, mergers and other long-term cooperative activities in order to enable the creation of 'more great art for everyone' – is vital, and this guide has been especially written with them in mind.

[14] See appendix 3

[15] See preface, About MMM

[16] See next section and Appendix 3 for details of the groups

[17] See Appendix 1

# 2. Organisational structures for collaboration

## "In the long history of animal kind (and human kind, too) those who learned to collaborate and improvise most effectively have prevailed."

**Charles Darwin**

Whilst few collaborations fit neatly into simple categories, and people need to build what works best for their own situations, the organisational structures that support collaborative activity tend to sit somewhere on a broad spectrum[18], ranging from the fully integrated (when collaborators merge their operations) to the purely ad hoc (when individuals choose to work together). The stories of the MMM pilot participants and others involved in such collaborations serve to illustrate each type.

**Model 1: Fully Integrated Merger**
This collaboration occurs when two (or more) arts and cultural organisations (A&COs) combine their operations and missions into a single organisation. The merger is usually achieved when one organisation merges with another, thereby preserving the corporate status and charitable exemption of one of the partners. However, sometimes the two partners choose to incorporate as a totally new, merged organisation.

### Example of a Fully Integrated Merger: Triumph Gallery and Yakut Gallery, (Russia)

Two of Moscow's leading contemporary art galleries announced a merger in 2008 to help Russian artists emerge both domestically and internationally. Triumph Gallery, a top seller of international artists in Russia, and Yakut Gallery, which played a pioneering role in discovering promising Russian artists in the 1990s, said the new entity would keep the name Triumph and occupy that gallery's 19th- century mansion in central Moscow. Russia's economy has grown for nine consecutive years, and a new class of wealthy Russians is eager to purchase luxury items and fine art. While

[18] The spectrum used here has been adapted from the Lodestar Center for Philanthropy & Nonprofit Innovation 'Models of Collaboration: Nonprofit organisations working together'. http://www.asu.edu/copp/nonprofit/conf/coll_models_report_FINALDRAFT.pdf

contemporary art was previously shunned by a society weaned on Soviet repression of innovation, its popularity has risen since the first Moscow Biennale in 2005. 'This marriage is based on both love and self-interest,' said Alexander Yakut, owner of the Yakut Gallery. 'We share the same ideas about art, but Yakut offers unrivalled experience and understanding of the Russian art scene, while Triumph offers a strong financial base and international contacts.'[19]

**Model 2: Partially-Integrated Merger**
An alternative to a full merger is a combination of organisations that does not result in the total loss of brand for the collaborators: a partially integrated merger. Two or more A&CO's might be formally merged in a partial integration, but the individual characters of the merged organisations are maintained in some way. Rather than being a 'merger that doesn't quite take', the partially integrated merger model is consciously chosen to pursue strategic advantages inherent in each of the collaborators.

### Example of a Partially-Integrated Merger: Trinity College of Music and Laban, (England)

Despite the obvious synergy between the study of music and the study of dance, British conservatoires have, until recently, been a strictly either/or choice. But the merger of Trinity College of Music in Greenwich with its Deptford neighbour, the contemporary dance school Laban, has created Britain's first dedicated conservatoire for both music and dance. Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance will be joining an established international sector, which counts among its number the Juilliard School in New York, the Ecole Nationale in Paris and the Royal Conservatory of the Hague in the Netherlands. On the face of it, there couldn't be two more different organisations. Trinity, founded in 1872, sits amid the stately splendour of the 17th-century King Charles Court at the Old Royal Naval College. Five minutes down the road, sandwiched between the old factories and warehouses of Deptford Creek, is Laban, named after Rudolf Laban, the Hungarian choreographer who arrived in the UK in 1938 as a refugee from the Nazis. Laban occupies a landmark new building, winner of the Stirling Architecture Prize in 2003, which seems to reflect the fluid, flexible shapes of its student body. Yet, as Executive

[19] http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601088&sid=aCWu1Efr4qXw&refer=muse

Director Derek Aviss points out, when you look beyond the contrasting architectural styles, the two organisations are actually very similar. Both, for example, see themselves as training students for employment in a "portfolio career" (it is hard to earn a living by performance alone). In addition, both organisations consider themselves to be innovators, and both are dedicated to working closely with the local community. Perhaps most importantly for the success of their link-up, both schools appreciate that there's more to making a merger work than organisational charts and head counts. "I've spent a lot of time working with multi-arts conservatoires around the world and it's not enough to have those art forms in co-existence," says Anthony Bowne, Principal. "You really need to understand each other's cultures and work at the synergies."

**Model 3: Joint Programme Office**
Imagine two or more complementary organisations that separately maintain their various programme offices. A merger may not fit their needs, but an overlap in some programmes or services may provide the opportunity for collaboration. A joint programme office requires no new programmes or organisational structures. Rather, two or more organisations combine on one or more programmes for the purpose of strengthening the efforts of all the organisations involved.

### Example of a Joint Programme Office: The Sponsors Club (England)

The Sponsors Club for Arts & Business was set up in 1991 by members of the North East business community with the aim of developing, supporting and fostering mutually beneficial commercial and creative partnerships between the North East business and cultural communities. The underlying belief was that the benefits of such partnerships made economic and social sense not only to the participants but also the communities in which they operated. Although part of the national Arts & Business network, it is funded and supported by its members who represent a range of businesses in the region, together with Universities, the Community Foundation, Arts Council of England, North East and OneNorthEast. It operates the A&B programmes in its region, but at the heart of the organisation is a first time sponsorship incentive scheme, funded by business membership fees, which is unique to the North East.

**Model 4: Joint Partnership with Affiliated Programming**
The development of shared projects by multiple non-profits is perhaps the most common type of joint partnership. In this case either two or more organisations join their operations for programming or delivery of services resulting in a co-ordination of services that is clear to both the organisations involved and their clients. Their complementary strengths enable the development of new and/or greatly enhanced services.

### Examples of Joint Partnership with Affiliated Programming: MMM pilots - National Performing Arts Companies and The Literature Forum for Scotland, (Scotland); and Exchange and Newcastle Gateshead Cultural Venues (England)

**Scotland's five National Performing Arts Companies** – Scottish Ballet, Scottish Opera, National Theatre of Scotland, Royal Scottish National Orchestra and Scottish Chamber Orchestra – are focusing on the development of a shared web presence to enable a major step change in public engagement opportunities, focusing initially on social media and ancillary content, such as interviews, talks, and behind the scenes videos. Simon Woods, Chief Executive of The Royal Scottish National Orchestra said at the start: "Learning how to work well together across a whole range of disciplines and organisational structures will be one of the hallmarks of successful arts businesses in the 21st Century. At a time of economic uncertainty, deploying collaborative solutions to joint challenges and opportunities is a pre-requisite for survival."

**The Literature Forum for Scotland,** which includes the Association for Scottish Literary Studies, Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals in Scotland (CILIPS), The Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA), Edinburgh International Book Festival, Edinburgh UNESCO City of Literature, The Gaelic Books Council, Itchy Coo, Moniack Mhor, National Association for Literature Development (NALD), National Library of Scotland, Playwrights' Studio Scotland, Publishing Scotland, Scots Language Centre, Scottish Book Trust, Scottish Language Dictionaries, Scottish Society of Playwrights, Scottish PEN, Scottish Poetry Library, Scottish Storytelling Forum, Society of Authors in Scotland and the University of Glasgow are focusing on the task of delivering a new strategic vision for Literature in

Scotland, exploring a more radical framework for the development, delivery and sustainability of the vision and its planned outcomes. Douglas Gifford, Chairman of the Literature Forum, said: "Transition is a major theme in the arts and cultural world in Scotland just now, and the Forum has seized the timely opportunity offered by the MMM programme to evolve and transform not only its own collaborative practices but its capacity to work with other partners. As a result we expect to be able to respond powerfully and effectively in the service of Literature to the opportunities offered by the changes around us."

**Exchange, which is made up of BalletLorent, The Empty Space, Name and Northern Stage**, is rationalising and re-imagining access to and use of rehearsal and development space for emerging work in the performing arts in the region. Caroline Routh, Co-founder of The Empty Space, said: "Even with the transformation of the cultural infrastructure in the North East region, access to research and development space appropriate for supporting a range of emerging work in the performing and digital arts sector remains limited. In order to encourage optimum health in our arts and cultural ecology the full lifecycle of creative processes needs to be nourished from the grass roots up. Each member of our group is intimately connected to supporting the early stages of creativity and our MMM collaborative pilot will deliver not only a better understanding of those lifecycle needs but a series of nationally relevant strategic responses to the physical space requirements of our target group."

**NewcastleGateshead Cultural Venues (NGCV)** is driven by the commitment, leadership and encouragement of a group of ten Chief Executives who have established a strong network of staff expert groups each sharing a common protocol for developing a wide variety of research and other projects. All the groups continuously build relationships and awareness between the professionals, their venues and the cultural offer. They are creative hubs and catalysts within the NGCV network and help build skills and competencies as well as a sense of common purpose, and seek to overcome the challenges of collaborating across ten diverse partner organisations. They are supported by an online social network, which enables them to communicate and access information and support between meetings, and by an external project manager. A robust evidence base is evolving which

demonstrates the combined economic, social and cultural impact of the ten organisations, as well as providing key baselines to inform actions and track progress in each area of collaboration. There have been four key areas of collaborative work:

- 'Back office' collaboration around shared services involves extensive sharing of expertise and intelligence to examine key costs, services and contracts. This is being used to negotiate better deals and services, to refine and improve policies, to take a joint approach to energy management and efficiency, to collaborate on training provision and to draw in expertise to benefit NGCV as a whole in the areas of human resources, facilities and finance.
- Public Engagement action research has resulted in a fundamental shift in thinking and the development of a range of test activities for personalised approaches to improve the opportunities for people to engage more deeply with the venues and across cultural forms. The approaches can be scaled up if they prove effective.
- Digital collaboration is enabling all venues to increase their knowledge base and share risk around digital investment. Using action research, groups are testing activities, which can help improve their online effectiveness and communications. This includes mobile technology, web optimisation, social networking, themed events and recommendation engines.
- Discussions around maximising the benefits of NGCV physical assets and diversification of income streams have resulted in the development of strategic documents and a joint approach to engaging, working and negotiating with key stakeholders from the public, private and voluntary sector, locally, regionally and nationally.

New working practices emerged following the end of the pilot, as the collaboration around creative programming, learning and participation and development functions evolved into the core work of the venues. In a joint statement issued in May 2010, the ten Chief Executives said of their collaboration, "We explore ways to become more efficient, more cost-effective, better informed about each other and the external landscape in which we operate, better placed to use our shared resources, better able to measure and demonstrate our collective value and better placed to engage with audiences and new technologies. This in turn makes us a more credible voice in representing the case for continued investment in culture (to gain maximum value

from all the investment of the past decade), a more powerful partner and customer, and better able to weather economic and other challenges and changes."

**Model 5: Joint Partnership for Issue Advocacy**
Organisations sometimes share the need to speak with one voice so that their collective message can be heard amid noise or powerful counter-interests. A joint partnership model is well suited for such joint interests, but the short-term or periodic nature of issue-based advocacy may not require a new, permanent organisation. Instead, collaborators lend leadership and staff to joint committees as needed, which allows them to move, communicate and mobilise in unison.

### Example of Joint Partnership for Issue Advocacy: Era21, (UK) and MMM pilot - Newcastle Gateshead Cultural Venues (England)

**Era21** is a cross industry network of unions and trade bodies that have united to promote the interests of the cultural sector, help build resilience amongst its memberships and speak out on behalf of the arts in times of crisis. The group is made up of the Independent Theatre Council, National Campaign for the Arts, Theatrical Management Association, Dance UK, Equity, BECTU, Musicians' Union, Association of British Orchestras, Museums Association, Opera and Music Theatre Forum, Audiences UK, The Theatres Trust, Artsadmin and the Visual Arts and Galleries Associations.

The idea for Era21 was formed following the controversial Arts Council England spending review in 2008, which had highlighted "a failure of leadership" in the sector, and the industry's "obsession" with the actions of the funding body. Charlotte Jones, Chief Executive of ITC and Convenor of ERA21 explaining the groups purpose said: The arts are a hugely powerful force socially, politically and economically. Working together more closely in these increasingly uncertain times can only benefit our collective memberships who combined make up the majority of the UK's professional arts and cultural sector." Jones sees Era21's role as improving advocacy and leadership within the industry: "to deepen debate and strengthen the confidence of the sector and its engagement to the wider world".

It is a network that provides a forum for organisations with both similar and opposing views to discuss issues impacting the arts, and attend debates with representatives from other industries to consider wider social problems. It is a group that is mobilised at times of crisis. NCA director Louise de Winter said that the group was looking to increase recognition of the wider arts sector: "The fact that we all represent memberships means that each of our organisations has a very strong validity and should be taken account of. "We are all our own bodies and we all do our own thing. This is an opportunity for us to share and come together, and where we can act in coordination, we will." Equity's Assistant General Secretary for theatre and variety, Stephen Spence, hopes that Era21 will give organisations a better understanding of each other's work: "I'm not saying industrial negotiations are going to be made easier, or suddenly resolved, but they help us better explain what we are trying to do."

**NewcastleGateshead Cultural Venues'** ten Chief Executives agreed upon strategic shared aims, as well as the key objectives of the MMM pilot project at an early stage in their formalised partnership, and both were shared widely. This was an important step in their deeper collaboration and has helped them to make use of their collective voice to promote their vision of maximising the economic and artistic potential of the cultural sector in the North East. Taking a strategic approach, NGCV is able to develop joint responses, submissions and be proactive in providing input into cultural, social and economic debate and policy and decision making at all levels.

Their shared aims are:

- To offer world-class cultural experiences and to sustain the rich cultural fabric of the region
- To develop audiences and encourage participation in culture in the North East
- To attract visitors, artists and producers to come to the North East
- To ensure the strength of culture in Newcastle Gateshead is recognised in the national and international conversation
- To support innovation and nurture the next generation of cultural producers
- To contribute to the social and economic well-being of the North East
- To pursue training and educational opportunities to ensure ongoing expertise and leadership in the sector

- To protect the current and future physical assets of each of the cultural forms
- To develop sustainable organisational and financial models across the membership of the consortium
- To share good practice and opportunities with the wider cultural sector
- To collaborate in the realisation of international partnerships.

Formalising their collaboration in this way, and agreeing approaches to specific issues and opportunities, enables individual Chief Executives to represent NGCV as a whole in strategic discussions and debate. They nominate representatives both on behalf of NGVC and the sector, to boards such as the Newcastle Gateshead Cultural Advisory Board and festival boards. They also share learning and ideas across peer groups and art forms, including museums, regionally, nationally and internationally. Their ability to influence and engage effectively with policy makers, politicians and funders is improved, as these and other key stakeholders find it easier to interface with NGCV Chief Executives as a strategic group, rather than have views or input from 10 separate organisations.

**Model 6: Joint Partnership with the Birth of a New Formal Organisation**
One of the more well known models for joint partnership is where two or more organisations determine that their joint activities are best implemented by forming a separate, independent organisation. The creation of such an organisation reflects both a maturity of purpose and a recognition by the entrepreneurial parent organisations that their long-term needs as a group are better served outside the scope of their existing organisations and/or that a new structure offers the freedom that is sometimes necessary for new joint enterprises to flourish.

### Example of Joint Partnership with the Birth of a New Formal Organisation: MMM pilot - Festivals Edinburgh (Scotland)

**Festivals Edinburgh** works on behalf of the twelve Edinburgh Festivals: Bank of Scotland Imaginate Festival, Edinburgh Art Festival, Edinburgh Festival Fringe, Edinburgh International Book Festival, Edinburgh International Festival, Edinburgh International Film Festival, Edinburgh Jazz and Blues Festival, Edinburgh International Science Festival, Edinburgh Mela, Edinburgh's Hogmanay, Edinburgh Military Tattoo and the Scottish International Storytelling Festival. It is working

strategically in six core areas in order to develop the global competitive edge of Edinburgh's Festivals. Faith Liddell, Director of Festivals Edinburgh, said: "Edinburgh is the world's greatest Festival City. The means of maintaining and strengthening that identity over the coming years lies in making the whole of the Festival ecology greater than the sum of its unique parts. Our collaborative journey has only just begun but already it is reaping significant rewards across all our areas of current mutual interest; marketing, technology, fundraising and partnership, programming, environmental issues and professional development. We're learning and growing as individual organisations and as a group and we look forward to sharing our story and giving others courage through MMM."

**Model 7: Joint Administrative Office and Back Office Operations:**
In a joint administrative office, efficiencies are achieved through shared administrative office and personnel, including financial and human resources management and information technology. Another approach is to contract administrative functions to a separate organisation whose sole job is to provide 'back office' support for other organisations.

### Example of Joint Administrative Office and Back Office Operations: MMM pilots - AV Festival, Northern Lights Film Festival and Tyneside Cinema (England)

**AV Festival, Northern Lights Film Festival and Tyneside Cinema** are devising ways of sharing a range of back-office functions and developing a more collaborative approach to programming and public engagement. Rebecca Shatwell, Director of AV Festival, said: "This unique grouping of Newcastle-based film and media arts organisations, all leaders in their respective fields are poised to enter new phases of growth. Enhancing our shared back office functions around volunteers, fundraising and finance, and expanding this collaborative way of working to artistic programming and public engagement, seems a natural evolution of our collective mission."

**Model 8: Confederation**
One well-known model of confederation is the United States, with individual states operating separately from, yet integrally part of, a federal whole. Similarly, an umbrella organisation exists because of the constituent parts, to which it provides services, co-ordination and other support. Among disparate similar entities, confederations can build co-ordination out of chaos and fragmentation. Cases differ in terms of how much control rests with the umbrella organisation. In some cases, the umbrella organisation tightly controls resources and information. In other cases, the umbrella organisation clearly answers to its members.

## Example of a Confederation: Audiences UK (England)

**The National Audience Development Network Ltd** was created in 1997. Its members were the growing number of individually managed and governed audience development agencies in UK, organisations that specialise in understanding how to engage and develop audiences for arts and cultural activities. The agencies had previously informally shared learning and good practice, but the establishment of this new company enabled them to deliver appropriate specific work together (see Model 6 above).

For 13 years the organisation traded as 'Network'. In 2010, it re-launched as 'Audiences UK' with a new business model and plan. Over time the membership had evolved to the point where there was almost universal geographic coverage of the UK. In addition, new opportunities were arising that required a national presence. 'Network' had always operated with minimal central resource. In 2009 the organisation was successful in raising significant funds to operate in a more 'federal' manner to deliver the following priorities:

- Shape the Debate. Draw on the wealth of intelligence generated by the regional agencies, to establish Network as a strong, authoritative voice on audiences and cultural engagement, influencing policy-makers within each national government, government sponsored public bodies and NGOs.
- Develop Skills. Provide professional development for audience development and public engagement specialists within a Quality Assurance Framework, with a particular focus on leadership.
- Deliver Nationally. Build on national initiatives such as Audience Data UK

and A Night Less Ordinary, by exploiting Network's ability to put together regional teams of experts to deliver on national projects.

- Strengthen the Organisation. Establish a clear brand position, and a robust business model, with a balanced portfolio of services, events and advocacy work.
- Enable the Agencies. Champion the work of the individual regional agencies at a national level, and use the Network business model to support their sustainability.

Whilst control currently still rests with the member organisations, the funding has facilitated the appointment of a Chief Executive for Audiences UK to provide national leadership and there is acknowledgement within the membership that governance arrangements will have to evolve to allow for this new 'federal' approach to deliver its potential.

**Model 9: Creative Adhocracies**
Collaboration between two or more individuals who choose to work together to accomplish a shared goal is perhaps the most familiar model of collaboration anywhere, no less so in the arts and cultural sector, with collaborations of this kind amongst individual artists being the most commonly recognised version. However, there is a growing trend for other individuals working in the sector - not artists – to come together in what are being described as 'creative adhocracies'. As the name implies, these are loose, highly organic, flexible organisational forms that often bring individuals motivated by super ordinate goals together in order to progress a specific project.

### Example of a Creative Adhocracy: Mission, Models Money (UK)

**Mission, Models, Money 's (MMM)** vision is to transform the way the arts use their resources to support the creation and experience of great art. Initiated in 2004, it existed as a project, hosted legally and financially first by the Jerwood Charitable Foundation and for a short period of time by the International Futures Forum until it was legally constituted as a company limited by guarantee without share capital in 2008. With a small core team of two directors initially, rising to 4 and a larger group of associates, MMM regularly draws in intellectual capital and administrative resource from a much wider multi-generational talent pool, accessed through its multiple memberships of different networks and organisations.

Fluidity, flexibility and adaptiveness are the core competencies required from the Directors and Associates as design and delivery teams are 'flocked' on a project-by-project basis. MMM works in cycles raising the resources for each cycle in turn. Whilst overarching themes are designed for each cycle, the final programme focus is more finely tailored in response to issues emerging on the frontline of creative practice in the UK at the time of delivery. With all contracts let on a freelance basis, MMM's organising systems are designed to be dynamic and organic in order to maintain maximum creativity and inventiveness, and quickly folded down if funding fails to materialise.

The model of the creative adhocracy was originally advocated by Henry Mintzberg[20] in the 1980s. His studies showed that individuals involved in creative adhocracies generally display high levels of flexibility, pragmatism and opportunism, have multiple skills and play multiple roles drawing on a broader network of allies and collaborators to work on strategies that are often highly visionary and 'emergent'. The concept of emergence is central to MMM's ethos. Organisational behaviourist Margaret Wheatley explains it thus: "...change always happens through emergence. Large-scale changes that have great impact do not originate in plans or strategies from on high. Instead, they begin as small, local actions. While they remain separate and apart, they have no influence beyond their locale. However, if they become connected, exchanging information and learning, their separate efforts can suddenly emerge as very powerful changes, able to influence a large system. This sudden appearance, known as an emergent phenomenon, always brings new levels of capacity. "[21]

[20] Mintzberg, H. (1989) Mintzberg on Management, New York, The Free Press

[21] Wheatley, M. and Frieze, D. (2006) How Large-Scale Change Really Happens - Working With Emergence (http://www.margaretwheatley.com/articles/largescalechange.html)

# 3. Competencies, qualities and attributes (CQAs) required for collaborative working

**"The systems intelligence needed to deal with the challenges we face as the Industrial Age comes to an end is collective and must be built through working together at many levels, within and beyond organisations, in teams and networks than span industries, communities and global supply chains"[22]**

**Peter Senge**

Much of the literature on collaboration concurs that successful collaboration is easier to espouse than achieve: far too many collaborative initiatives produce a lot of talk but little action. This same literature also offers insight into the kinds of behaviours that help and hinder successful collaboration. It suggests that the problems that arise in collaborating come, in part, from underestimating the difficulties that highly diverse groups experience when learning together. Even if group members recognise that they need to do this, they frequently avoid exploring difficult subjects because they want to avoid conflict. They know that trust is important but they often lack reliable strategies for building it. They may say they want to work collaboratively across boundaries, but ultimately self-interest and vested interests prevail.[23]

In the arts, as in the wider not for profit sector, the initial impetus to collaborate can often be driven by funders, which can create a culture of shallow opportunism about money rather than a carefully considered, hard-headed assessment of mutually desired goals. One pilot participant explained it thus: *"there is such intense pressure for people around outputs, around funding, around staying open and paying wages ...that inevitably ...despite all the rhetoric around collaboration, it is easy to form (a kind of) protectionism around what you have...people collaborate as a means to getting that additional extra funds or means of retaining the funds they have already got."* The dangerous impact of this dynamic is what David Carrington has described as 'the dance of deceit' where *"the funder may set the terms and processes, but the funded, fearful of there being no alternative, 'bend too willingly' in whatever*

[22] Senge, P. et al (2008) The Necessary Revolution, Nicholas Brearley Publishing

[23] Ibid. See also http://emergentbydesign.com/2010/07/01/guidelines-for-group-collaboration-and-emergence/

*direction money is blowing"*[24] This was underlined by another pilot participant: *"...people who work in the arts are used to knowing that there are ways that you are supposed to present things within a particular funding stream ... actually I think sometimes what is real... in people's minds [becomes] confused."* Even without financial carrots spurring a collaboration into life, genuinely shared visions within and across sectors are rare, with one person's or one small group's vision being imposed, subtly or otherwise, on others.

One reason for all these shortfalls is that collaboration is often built upon good intentions rather than the requisite competencies, qualities and attributes (CQAs) present within the collaborative group. Effective collaboration often requires CQAs that are not necessarily present among executive leaders. It takes time and a high level of commitment, to build 'collaborative muscle'. In the absence of these, well-established bad habits can take over, such as avoiding conflict or launching into debates that merely reinforce previously held views.

Understanding the breadth and depth of CQAs needed by individual organisations and across groups is especially crucial in a challenging environment. Indeed, with hindsight, a number of participants in the pilots felt that testing for the presence of these essential CQAs before embarking on their collaborative projects would have been a very valuable exercise. *"..we could (have done with) a consultation to tell us what is lacking... because you don't actually know what you are lacking until you get into it and doing it",* said one participant. *"...you need to talk more [about] being collaboration-read. Maybe a preparatory period of development and support to actually get organisations into the right state of mind. ...our facilitator in that first away day ... felt we were nowhere near ready. She thought ... we were actually averse,"* said another.

MMM is developing a diagnostic tool building on the work of others[25], designed to help others with this task in the future.

[24] http://www.davidcarrington.net/documents/CARITAS_August09_p33-p35editedCSFINAL__000.pdf

[25] There are several diagnostic tools already available designed for the private sector e.g. GBPA's Collaborative Excellence diagnostic http://www.gbpalliance.com/index.html

# 10 Essential CQAs for successful collaboration

Findings from interviews with participants in the six collaborative working pilots, together with MMM's own research[26] and an extensive literature review suggest that the following are essential CQAs for successful collaboration:

### 1. Seeing systems

Creative practitioners and organisations that collaborate successfully have learned how to view the larger systems in which they live and work. They look beyond events and superficial fixes to see deeper structures and forces at play. They don't allow boundaries (either organisationally or culturally imposed) to limit their thinking.[27] One pilot participant described it as *"The ability to look beyond the short-term benefits and take the longer term view, which is by far the most difficult view to take, because everyone wants the best for their own organisation".*

### 2. Wanting to learn

At an individual level, learning is more concerned with gaining knowledge, understanding, and skills. At an organisational level, it is more concerned with evolving perceptions, visions, strategies, and transferring knowledge. At both levels, it is involved with discovery and invention - i.e. recognising, creating, or exploring new knowledge to generate new ideas or concepts. Senge defines a learning organisation as one where *"...people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning to see the whole together"*[28] This is neatly sums up the kind of organisational culture needed to be successful in a collaborative endeavor. Unfortunately, in many arts and cultural organisations, especially the larger ones, organisational structures are not conducive to reflection and learning. The hierarchical corporate structure, with different functions in separate departments, can not only create competition for resources but also develop competing core values and measures of success. Furthermore, people may lack the tools and guiding ideas to

[26] http://www.missionmodelsmoney.org.uk/programme/21st-century-people/

[27] Senge, P et al (2008) The Necessary Revolution, Nicholas Brearley Publishing

[28] Senge, P.M. 1990. *The Fifth Discipline,* Century Business

make sense of the situations they face. Discovering how to tap people's commitment and capacity to learn at all levels is key, as was evidenced by many participants in the pilots, who had the opportunity to observe how others workedSome gained profound insights into their own practice: *"I have discovered myself fighting for things I didn't know I cared about quite so much. I mean championing public engagements is really interesting. My career as an artistic director [has meant] being the person who has to fight off the marketing teams in order to try and make the work I want to make. And so discovering that actually I was the person who really cared about not just how we talk to the public, but whether we could change the way the public behaved towards us or whether audience numbers could change the way they behave towards us, has been really interesting. It hasn't been so much that I have changed any views, but I have discovered how free I felt about it."*

### 3. Building shared vision

One of the disciplines required of successful learning organisations, building shared vision, is critical to success in collaborations and emerged as the biggest pre-occupation of participants in the pilots.

Creating shared vision means unearthing shared 'pictures of the future' that foster genuine commitment and enrolment rather than compliance. It is achieved through processes that are inclusive, and spread effectively through processes that are reinforcing, for example when increased clarity, enthusiasm and commitment rubs off on others: "*As people talk, the vision grows clearer. As it gets clearer, enthusiasm for its benefits grow"*[29].

Those who have been involved in developing and delivering shared visions know that they have the power not only to be hugely uplifting but also to encourage experimentation and innovation. However, vision is only truly shared when people are committed to each other having it, not just each person individually having it. That sense of connection and community with respect to the vision is needed to provide the focus and energy for learning. It is the commitment to support each other in realising the shared vision that gives the vision power and supplies the guiding

[29] Ibid

force that enables organisations to navigate difficult times and to keep the learning process on course.[30]

Shared vision takes time to emerge and requires on-going dialogue. By sharing and listening to each other's personal visions, new insights will surface that continually shape the shared vision making it into a perpetual ongoing process of evolution driven by a constant need to assess both the internal and external environment.[31] As one pilot participant put it*: "the best collaboration happens when you go with a blank sheet of paper and talk to somebody [with] shared interests and commonalities: something genuinely comes out of the conversation."*

Pilot participants recognised the importance of spending time shaping and re-shaping shared vision in various ways, often continuing to do so when they were quite well into the collaboration: *"To me the big mind-shift that has happened is that… the larger organisation is moving from thinking 'what can this do for us' to…. genuinely looking at what can this do [for the] broader concept. … shifting away from 'how does it help us' to 'how does it help the project'… was really important."*

The process of shaping and re-shaping shared vision was often challenging in very positive ways: *"I think it might have been a great advantage that our needs could not be met… we have had to step out of the role where there was… something immediate or short term (for us) to gain and to get into a more philosophical role about how we interact with the sector, which was not the (original) intention."* One participant reflected, *"…this has started to open up some permeability actually. And it has allowed us to interrogate… how we all think or feel about our relationship with artist development, rather than ticking a box, to really say 'do we do it'? Do we just skim the surface of it? Could we do it better?"* Sometimes, however, the process generated some uncomfortable truths: *"…we are not a homogenous a group and therefore I think some hurdles we have had to face up to have been because we have not only different starting points, but different interests.", one* pilot participant observed.

[30] http://www.systemsinsync.com/pdfs/Shared%20Vision.pdf

[31] Ibid

Clarity of purpose was seen as a major contributor to developing successful shared visions across the pilot groups as this quote illustrate: *"…what is the most important thing? What is it you are going to collaborate for? Do you believe that is a worthwhile end? Secondly, will you get something from it? Or somebody else get something out of it? And will the net benefit exceed the effort in time, cost, commitment and what you might have to give up in order to take part in that?"*

### 4. Building a critical mass for change within an organisation

Without first patiently building internal leadership networks within organisations to carry forward bold new ideas, large-scale collaboration can result in lots of reports and declarations but little real organisational change. Engaging people in the process of change from the beginning enables people to contribute their ideas, experience and knowledge. They are able to validate the change and become supporters and advocates of it, which encourages ownership and responsibility. Without engagement, change can be seen as being 'imposed' and 'done to me'. But to create change of a certain scale it is necessary to embrace the energy in the whole system. Change operating in isolation will not bring about the full benefits and added value. With a critical mass of support behind the change effort, implementation occurs naturally, with greater speed and ease. Until a critical mass is achieved the change is very frail and can be easily destroyed.

Buy-in from across the organisation was not always achieved early enough in some pilots: *"…it has sat too deeply with the CEOs",* observed one group. *"No matter how many times I have restructured and changed (X), or how many times I have learned the lesson that it is always best to be open, it is always best to tell everybody everything up front, it is always best to engage as many people as possible in everything, and they will go with you, I still don't do it… I still have to stop myself and make myself do it",* confessed one participant. *"Those who are engaging with this are very positive and enthusiastic about it, but there are an awful lot of others who still don't really know about it… Embedding the process much more deeply across the organisation for the longer term, that for me is quite important and I don't know how we tackle that,"* said another.

Other challenges to building the critical mass needed lay with the changing nature of

the collaborative focus and in trust building: *"…it has been quite tough to explain to the rest of the team what the value is in continuing to be part of the collaboration, because it has had to change so much… they accepted that, but that has not been an easy conversation to have"* was one participants experience. *"There are a whole set of skills around how you allow everybody to participate in a way that is meaningful for everybody. It requires everyone to be honest and direct and open. One of the biggest challenges I have found is that there is a coded behaviour that goes on; there are many levels of nuance about what people say and what they mean"* was another.

When groups got this right the new energy released was palpable: *"members of staff that are involved in the different meetings are reporting back that they are having a really fascinating revelatory game-changing time"*

*"…they all love meeting what they call the 'other organisations' and they all got an awful lot out of that. So it has been very valuable."*

*"..we were a bit slow off the blocks, trying to get people in my place involved. But people are involved in various working groups now and they are all incredibly excited about it."*

*"Some of the staff we have involved have been people who are used to working in a collaborative way, but also others were not used to that and they came back quite shocked in a good way, having their horizons opened after management meetings. People came back jaws dropped."*

Often well-tuned project management processes helped to create that critical mass: "*it is so well organised that people are getting to pick up on bits of it now and are very excited about it. They are really enjoying being asked to go to various task groups and feeling that there is something tangible to get out of it."*

### 5. Developing mutual trust and respect

Trust and respect are interlinked and underpin all good relationships. They are the sine qua non of effective collaboration because the nature of collaboration itself – working jointly in

order to achieve shared goals and outcomes – requires interdependence between those involved and interdependence creates vulnerabilities.

Given its importance, knowing what kind of trust is required and knowing how to build and maintain it is key. Solomon and Fernando[32] distinguish between three kinds of trust, advocating what they describe as 'authentic trust' as the kind best pursued and developed. Authentic trust, they propose, involves conscious evaluation of others, taking into account the individual capabilities and personal histories of those being trusted, recognising the inherent risk and making the conscious choice to trust anyway.

The behavioural patterns that generate trust are generally considered to be reliability and consistency, reciprocity and integrity, open and honest communication, sharing and delegating, and empathy and loyalty. The wider literature around collaboration stresses the need to understand the potential landmines related to trust. Collaborations often run into trouble because they jump too quickly to "outcomes" without first setting ground rules and building key relationships of trust at both the executive director and staff levels. Time and resources spent on assessing levels of trust at the outset and developing strategies for building trust can avoid significant problems later on. As corporate anthropologist Karen Stephenson says, "relationships are the true medium of knowledge exchange, and trust is the glue that holds them altogether"[33].

Out of all the behavioural patters listed above, the need for open and honest communication was the most referenced by the pilot groups as these quotes demonstrate:

*"...speaking the truth, saying exactly what your agenda is as an organisation, is*

[32] Solomon, R.C. and Flores, F. (2001) Building Trust In Business, Politics, Relationships, and Life, OUP. The other two types of trust they define are: *naive trust*, that unreflective innocent trust of a small child with no concept of betrayal; and *blind trust*, that self-deceptive willful denial of any evidence of betrayals.

33 Stephenson, K. (2005) Trafficking in Trust, The Art and Science of Human Knowledge Networks, at http://www.drkaren.us/KS_publications01.htm

*very important. Each part of the collaboration needs to know exactly what the other part of it wants to get out of it…"*

*"One of the things about this process that was very clear quite quickly is that we all entered into the collaboration because we had our own agendas, and those agendas we thought and hoped were complementary. To really work in a collaborative way you have to be honest as to whether that remains true. We certainly had to explore the fact that some of the things we wanted, we are not going to get… you have got to be really clear what it is you want and not conceal it. In more straight- forward partnerships, say between a funder and an organisation, or a client or customer, you don't need to declare your hand in the way that you do with a bigger collaborative group."*

*"as much as you think you can be crystal clear with conversations and perspectives of information being shared, you need to really, really spell it out."*

## 6. Managing across boundaries

Managing successfully across boundaries is key to successful collaborations and requires the active building of both hard and soft relationship bonds - hard meaning the formal relationships which need to be built around the structured processes required for collaboration, and soft meaning more personal relationships and friendships. These softer bonds have been proven to have the most impact on managing across boundaries, and championing the practices and processes that support co-operative relationships is crucial to bridging boundaries and sharing knowledge.[34] The actual power of an organisation exists in the structure of its human network, not in the architecture of command and control superimposed on it.[35] Tacit knowledge – the critical information that makes organisations functional – is in fact transferred not through established channels within the formal hierarchy but instead through informal relationships. The quality, type and extent of those relationships are much more influential than most leaders recognise. As Stephenson says: *"Relationships are the true medium of knowledge exchange, and trust is the glue*

[34] http://www.lyndagratton.com/downloads/collaboration1.pdf

[35] ibid

*that holds them altogether."*[36]Collaborating successfully requires those in leadership positions to take heed of this reality and harness it using their 'convening' skills to ensure that right people can come together at the right time and are able to speak openly and productively.

## 7. Communicating effectively and appropriately

Whether people understand each other and how information is transferred within organisations and across groups often tops the list of problems in collaborative working. Too much information can be just as much of a problem as too little, underlining the point that it is not quantity that is the key, but what people do with the information once they have got it that really matters. Restricting the speed of information flow can, however, be detrimental to a collaborative team: differentiating between meetings focused on brainstorming, problem solving, decision-making or feedback and those where the purpose is to inform can be helpful.[37]

People also tend to believe that communication will forge agreement, whilst in reality when people communicate accurately, they can learn just how far apart they really are. Drucker summed up the communications grail thus: *"In no other area have intelligent men and women worked harder or with greater dedication than psychologists, human relations experts, managers, and management students on improving communications in our major institutions. Yet communications has proven as elusive as the Unicorn."*[38]

Successful collaborations tend to display two communication characteristics: communication is open and frequent among the partners to the collaboration, and both informal and formal communication links are established. Two communication methods that can facilitate greater collaborative effort are 'appreciative inquiry' and 'dialogue'. Appreciative inquiry is used in organisational development to focus on the strengths of an organisation or group and the possibilities rather than the problems. Multiple stakeholders with differing perspectives are asked to work together and

[36] http://www.drkaren.us/pdfs/chapter15.pdf

[37] http://emergentbydesign.com/2010/07/01/guidelines-for-group-collaboration-and-emergence/

[38] Drucker, P. (1974) 'Management: tasks, responsibilities, practices' London: Heinemann

develop a shared vision, strategies for implementation, and assessment of gains. This communication approach is one of active listening, positive regard for differences, and the belief in multiple realities. Visioning together what would be possible and how to get to improved outcomes is quite a different starting point from the problem solving-approach. 'Dialogue' is a process that facilitates thinking and questioning together. In dialogue, conversations focus on surfacing assumptions, goals, and values, and summarising disparate ideas in search of connections. This type of strategic conversation allows for further exploration and clarification of different vantage points, thus enabling the development of new knowledge. Information sharing is increased and expertise within the group begins to surface, leading to a new valuation of difference as a context for innovation.

Few executive leaders in the arts or elsewhere possess the depth of communication skills required to facilitate appreciative inquiry or dialogue. As one pilot participant commented: *"You get personalities who play it a bit more like a Poker game. They don't like to put their cards on the table and all the time they are worried about what might be the outcome of this and what is in this for me in terms of the outcome."* Adding a facilitator with expertise in these areas at key junctures in the collaborative process could result in powerful and new outcomes.[39]

Listening to and observing team members to better recognise their values, goals, and ways of communicating are also critical actions to engage in if good collaboration is to develop. This takes time and effort. As Covey [40] notes: *"Real listening shows respect. It creates trust. As we listen, we not only gain understanding, we also create the environment to be understood. And when both people understand both perspectives, instead of being on opposite sides of the table looking across at each other, we find ourselves on the same side looking at solutions together".* As one participant who had been well listened to commented: "*I have been made to feel that our contribution is meaningful and useful to the group."*

[39] http://www.systemsinsync.com/pdfs/Shared%20Vision.pdf

[40] Covey, S.R. (2004) '7 Habits of Highly Effective People', Simon & Schuster Ltd

## 8. Confronting issues and managing conflict

The unavoidability of conflict among collaborating parties has been well documented. Indeed it is inevitable when different ways of thinking and working collide. Yet those different ways of thinking are essential to finding ways forward in complexity, so if managed well, conflict can be a powerful source of creativity and innovation. *"Everybody has to agree from the beginning that there is nothing that can't be disagreed with"* said one pilot participant.

However, many people in their professional lives have not learned to understand the potentially beneficial aspects of conflict and to recognise that positive affective relationships and conflict are equally important to effective decision-making. As one pilot participant observed: *People tend to personalise their views and it becomes a personal issue, or they are unreasonably inhibited about putting their views on the table because they fear others may disagree with them, failing to see that it's often from disagreement that the most productive things come."*

Garner proposes that, when using conflict to facilitate collaboration, it is helpful to distinguish between emotional conflict and task conflict. Emotional conflict centres around relationships between individuals and can evolve from a task conflict. Task conflict centers around judgmental differences about how to achieve a common objective and is often easier to address than emotional conflict. Collaborative leaders must be able to facilitate debate (conflict) over task issues and promote the expression of different perspectives on how problems are defined and approached. If emotional conflict and personal issues surface within the team, leaders need to be able to redirect concerns away from the personal to the task, but when emotional conflict is experienced within a collaborative context, it needs to be discussed, not avoided. [41] Conflict is dispelled, not by one side dominating the other, or by compromising, but by a creative integration that meets the differing needs of the collaborating parties. Rather than thinking of alternatives that lock into either/or situations, a collaborative approach develops a synthesis of perspectives to invent a third alternative.

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[41] Gardner, D. (2005) Essential Competencies for Collaborative Partnerships: Ten Lessons http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/499266_3

This synthesis of perspectives is the desired outcome of collaboration.[42] Achieving this synthesis was a challenge for some groups, as this point made by one pilot participant illustrates: *"I would say a key thing that has been very well aired by the group is the tension between smaller organisations with less funding, less security, and less stability in their history, and larger organisations like ourselves, because we are the only one in this partnership to have this level of funding or physical assets…with the best will in the world, there is a suspicion that we are likely to somehow to soak up all the resources, or not have needs of our own, or not be able to be generous in quite the same way…. And I think on the other side there is a suspicion - or an anxiety – that smaller organisations really just need us to fix things for them."*

Other experiences showed that synthesis emerging strongly: *"I think there is a cordiality about the way in which this group operates. I have only been a member latterly but over the past year I don't think in any of these meetings there has ever been anything approaching argument. That is not to say that everyone sees everything in exactly the same way, but there is a maturity and an intelligence that enables this group to talk through issues."*

## 9. Adapting to changing circumstances

Sustainability, at its core, is the capacity to create, test and maintain adaptive capacity. Building adaptive capacity individually and organisationally will be essential to our survival into the 21st century. It is no less important in enabling successful collaboration, which, as with any change process, requires participants to abandon the familiar and the routine. Sussman[43] has proposed that whilst organisational capacity serves the strategic purpose of stabilising organisations and creating order, adaptive capacity involves the complementary and often destabilising quest for change in pursuit of improved performance, relevance and impact. Organisations that possess adaptive capacity are very focused on and responsive to what is happening outside their organisational boundaries. They consciously interact with their environments, which, in turn, provide information-rich feedback,

[42] Ibid

[43] Sussman, C. (2004) 'Building Adaptive Capacity: the quest for improved organizational performance', Sussman Associates

stimulate learning, and ultimately prompt improved performance. Sussman proposes four qualities that capture the essence of adaptive organisations: external focus; network connectedness; inquisitiveness and innovation. Like other capacity-building efforts, adaptive capacity is not a summit that can be conquered and a flag planted. It is something organisations pursue in an ongoing manner through measures that embed the four attributes [44]

## 10. Valuing risk taking, tolerating failure

The interdependence and complexity that lies at the heart of collaborative working inevitably increases exposure to risk. NCVO[45] have listed what they see as the main risks of collaborating (as well as the potential benefits), which include: outcomes not justifying the time and resources invested; loss of flexibility in working practices; complexity in decision-making and loss of autonomy; diverting energy and resources away from core aims - mission drift; damage to or dilution of brand and reputation; damage to organisation and waste of resources if collaboration is unsuccessful; lack of awareness of legal obligations and stakeholder confusion.[46] All these (and probably some more) and their complex interaction represent multi-layered and unpredictable sources or risk and failure.

Hansen[47] has identified a number of what he calls 'collaboration traps' including: collaborating in hostile territory; over collaborating; overshooting the potential value of the collaboration; underestimating costs; misdiagnosing the problem and implementing the wrong solutions. His solution is to adopt a set of principles, which he calls 'disciplined collaboration' (of which more in the next section.) Yet if learning how to collaborate more and more effectively is to be a key part of our survival kit, then valuing the risk-taking that entails, and tolerating the failures that will inevitably come about simply because risks sometimes result in failure, will need to be more warmly embraced.

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[44] http://www.barrfoundation.org/usr_doc/Building_Adaptive_Capacity.pdf

[45] The National Council for Voluntary Organisations

[46] http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/advice-support/collaborative-working/information-and-tools/whatcollaborativeworkinginvolves#Benefits_and_risks

[47] Hansen, M. (2009) Collaboration, Harvard Business Press

Ellis[48] has asserted that the productive tension between the demands of continued viability and those of risk-taking represent the force field in which the successful leadership of cultural organisations plans, manages and makes choices. He proposes that arts and cultural organisations that wish to extend their capacity to take risks need to manifest at least three distinctive traits. Firstly, a clarity about 'what really matters', what capacities and purposes the organisation chooses to protect, what can be negotiated, and what is non- negotiable and why. Secondly, a deep interest in understanding the wider environment in which they operate and the likely impact of changes in that environment on their own situation. And thirdly, an equal interest in their own organisational dynamics: the causal relationships that link programs, financial capacity and organisational capacity – the 'iron triangle' – that if ignored, will always prevent an organisation from realising its potential.[49]

[48] Ellis, A. (2002) 'Taking risks in times of adversity: a background note for the Ford Foundation's New Directions/New Donors program', Nonprofit Finance Fund, New York

[49] http://www.aeaconsulting.com/articles/Taking%20Risks.pdf

# 4. Disciplined Collaboration

## "Good collaboration amplifies strength but poor collaboration is worse than no collaboration at all."[50]

**Morten Hansen**

One of the simplest and most powerful frameworks for working out how to achieve successful collaborative working is based on Morten Hansen's idea of 'disciplined collaboration'[51] which he sums up as " *the leadership practice of properly assessing when to collaborate (and when not to) and instilling in people both the willingness and the ability to collaborate when required."* His solution to achieving disciplined collaboration and avoiding what he calls the 'collaboration traps' is to pursue three steps:

### Step 1: Evaluate opportunities for collaboration

Asking probing questions in is key to assessing whether there really are compelling reasons to collaborate. In the not for profit arts and cultural sector these questions can usefully be curated around the three themes of mission, models and money. How will collaborating help better delivery of the organisation's mission or how can it help renew mission? What will be the advantages for our operational model? And what positive impact will it have on our finances? As one pilot participant put it: *"... part of your mind-shift has to be about when it is good to do something and when it is not - whether you can add value, or whether you actually are forcing an issue that is of little consequence."* As Hansen says, *"collaboration is a means to an end and that end is great performance.This means that often it may be better not to collaborate, because there is simply no compelling reason to do so."*

### Step 2. Spot barriers to collaboration

Hansen proposes four typical barriers:

- The 'not invented here' barrier (people are unwilling to reach out to others)
- The hoarding barrier (people are unwilling to provide help)
- The search barrier (people are not able to find what they are looking for)

[50] Hansen, M.T. (2009) 'Collaboration', Harvard Business School Press

[51] Ibid

- The transfer barrier (people are not able to work with people they do not know well)

Added to these, for the not for profit arts and cultural sector there is a fifth barrier - that of over-extension and undercapitalisation, *"with too many organisations trying to do more things than they can possibly do well, with both human and financial resources too thinly spread."*[52] In common with the wider sector, the pilot group did not have unrestricted funds or reserves which could be assigned to the key costs of collaborative working, such as the specialist and technical expertise required for each of the three stages. Furthermore, the fact that collaboration takes a lot of time – very often over a long period of time – was underlined by all the pilot groups. One participant described their collaborative project as a 'luxury' which could really only be engaged with after all the hurly burly of the organisation's day-to-day existence had been 'got on top of'. Collaborative working is a huge challenge for people who are time poor and juggling many roles at once.

### Step 3. Tailor solutions to tear down the barriers

Armed with an understanding of the barriers, appropriate solutions can be designed. One of the commonest barriers that emerged across the pilot group was the transfer barrier, where people are not able to work with people they do not know well. Whilst some Chief Executives had worked with each other over long periods of time and knew each other well, team members elsewhere in their organisations often did not know their counterparts in the other organisations involved in the collaboration. Solutions to this were varied, but in three of the pilots, the creation of smaller issue-based groups that met regularly and had multi-organisational membership proved very effective in forging new relationships and enabling trust and understanding to flourish.

[52] Ellis, A (2004) New ways of sustaining the arts in the UK, MMM

# 5. Early stage challenges in collaborative working

## "Real knowledge is to know the extent of one's ignorance"

### Confucius

Scant attention is paid to lifecycle issues in any aspect of business model evolution in the not for profit arts and cultural sector, including collaborative working. Organisations generally pay greater attention and apply more resources to the early or start up stages of the lifecycle and there is often an expectation of immediate success. Paying insufficient attention to early challenges can raise questions about the long-term sustainability of the collaboration. Recent studies from the private sector have identified collaboration failure rates in the 50% - 60% range, and even those ventures that do eventually succeed must frequently overcome serious problems in their early years[53]. Many of the groups in the pilot had never collaborated in any formal way until the MMM offer of participating was made. Then, when their involvement was agreed, they simply 'got started', leaving fundamental issues of leadership and discussions about joint aims and understandings until later. They would now concur that spending more time on preparation prior to firing the starter gun would have been valuable.

### Crystallising the purpose

This initial stage of a collaboration is a difficult but critical 'shake out' period when its purpose has to be decided. As these comments by pilot participants testify, most group members find themselves having to begin by navigating through unfamiliar territory in which they have no clear frame of reference. Agreeing a written collaboration statement is helpful, even if this evolves over time.

*"There are so many opportunities and so many things we can do together– and so much benefit we could all get out of it. It is kind of unimaginable and it is too big actually."*

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53 http://seangallaghersite.com/yahoo_site_admin/assets/docs/Business_Alliances_early_stage_problems.6013056.pdf

*"I have learnt that it pays to be more uncomfortable at the beginning of the collaboration… and that probably means there is a period of everybody having to feel around in the dark."*

*"First and foremost it is important to reach an agreed position about what you are hoping to achieve at the end. It is a description, however inadequate – and subsequently liable to be edited – that describes the outcome. What is the desirable state that you think you are working towards? Unless you are able to describe that, you are not going to get very far. Within that, but in addition, you have got to be able to decide what the benefits are to you and your organisation… And that is not some limited, narrow, selfish perspective. It is perfectly proper to say 'what benefit is there to me in taking part?' and then to listen to the benefits the other partners see as emerging from engagement in the process. So you start with the outcome, and agree while you are all there why collaboration is desirable. Are you broadly speaking talking the same language? Are you 'in the same ballpark?' And if you are, you can then begin to work out how you are going to go forward."*

## Ensuring mission congruence

Organisations tend to muddle up their vision statements with their mission statements, using these terms interchangeably. In preparing for a collaborative project however, distinguishing between them is important. Vision statements relate to the future the organisation wants to create for the community it aims to serve. Mission statements describe what the organisation will do to bring that vision to reality. Mission statements are hugely powerful forces, expressing the fundamental identity of the organisation and the values and beliefs of those who work in them. Ways of seeing the world and ways of operating spring from an organisation's mission and help shape the 'corporate' culture of the organisation. Ensuring right at the beginning that partners understand each other's mission and where they might overlap either creating competitive friction or co-operative opportunity will help build relationships and prevent misunderstandings emerging further down the line as these pilot participant comments illustrate:

*"...we thought we'd sorted it and then it went to the next level and went pear-shaped and we had to pull it back together again. A lot of that wasn't just the mechanics of whether we thought we had done it at the right time or not... it was around quite a fundamental issue of individual company identity... With quite a dispersed – yet high profile – group like this, that was a key issue..."*

*" we have always talked about this group as essentially being about collaboration rather than competition. But it is easy to say that when you are not doing any real projects. What has become clear to me is the absolute reality that we are able to work in a way that is aggressive and ambitious about own businesses, but also completely collaborative about these processes."*

*"...like a lot of these consortiums I guess, we are different shapes and sizes and compositions, particularly working in different art form areas. Some charge for tickets, whilst at others the consumer experience is free. And I suppose I have been surprised and reassured by how similar are the core challenges we all face, even if the sector looks very different on the face of it. The minute you get a couple of layers down, you find the ordinary business challenges day-to-day are much more similar than I expected actually."*

### Recognising the different kinds of value being created

At the early stages it is hard to pin down. the kinds of value that the new resources and capabilities created by collaboration can bring to both the partners and the wider public Very often, the value most prioritised is financial – will the collaboration offer efficiencies by saving money? Will it develop competitive advantage in making the case for maintaining and/or increasing investment from public and private funders? Will it create access to new revenue streams? Understanding of the other kinds of human value that emerge through collaborative working tends to surface only as the collaboration gets into its stride and/or when mutual discovery, sense- making and trust grow. Successful collaborative working builds social capital, releasing new energies and new ways of thinking which as the pilot group testified, produces highly innovative ways at looking at seemingly intractable problems. There were many examples of the recognition of these other forms of value, as these comments illustrate:

*"..it is not so much increased capacity in terms of the talent or ability of staff involved... it is the fact that we are tapping into those talents and abilities. So a number of people who were not previously even involved... have come to the fore. They have blossomed, and are inputting at a more strategic level as well as relating to people in other organisation. They now feel they are part of the strategic direction"*

*"There have been some very, very interesting spin-off meetings with smaller numbers of organisations sitting around beginning to look each other in the eye and say, okay, so if this is the general climate and the way things are moving, what about our area of endeavour? What can we do? ... some of those encounters have been absolutely fascinating, because they have unpacked some of the layers of anxieties and problems that individual organisations are having to face."*

### Communicating

Good communication is essential. Not only does it clarify shared vision and purpose, it builds understanding and trust which then release positive energy, valuable know-how and resources into the collaborative endeavour. Communications of an appropriate quality and frequency can be enabled by setting up the right kind of structures and bringing in the right kind of technical assistance at critical junctures. Festivals Edinburgh provides an example of how this can be achieved[54].

### Paying sufficient attention to 'soft skills'

The single biggest challenge in collaborative working is recognising the importance of relationships and managing the issues that emerge. These may be issues not only of trust, but also relating to organisational culture, differences in organisational size and management styles. Lack of attention to these is the commonest reason for the disbanding of most collaboration[55] and time and resources spent at the outset in these areas can avoid significant problems later on. Examples of how these issues played out in the pilot groups is illustrated in the following interviews:

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[54] See Appendix 3.

[55] http://seangallaghersite.com/yahoo_site_admin/assets/docs/Business_Alliances_early_stage_problems.6013056.pdf

*"Another lesson which has been a surprise for me is that collaboration requires leadership. If we look at our organisations, I suspect we all have pretty collaborative environments. We work very hard on this… In this group, nobody has been saying to us 'you must collaborate'. It has been on our own shoulders to collaborate and I think one of the problems has been that we are all timid about showing leadership, because nobody wants to be perceived as being more knowledgeable, more dominant or more proactive than anybody else. We want to be very respectful and we want to work very well together. I think that has impeded us from actually empowering the right people to lead the group and require the team work to happen…"*

*" the organisations themselves are extremely diverse, from those that are primarily held together by voluntary effort to quite large professional set ups, and there were cultural differences in how people felt the discipline of the collaboration could or should work."*

*"I think the interesting thing about this particular project and the interesting thing about why the cultural organisations struggle with this, is that to be excellent, there is quite a lot of ego involved. There kind of has to be… If we boil this right down to what makes the arts special, it is very special creative people. And if bods like me serve any function, then it is to create the best circumstances for people to engage with very special creative people. And that means the management of audience expectations and the management of artistic expectations. To compromise for the sake of creating combined projects is really dangerous."*

### Understanding resourcing needs

With most arts and cultural organisations suffering from overextension and undercapitalisation, resourcing for collaborative working is problematic. This factor alone may be the key reason why there are not more examples of collaboration in the sector. Traditionally, arts and cultural organisations, in common with the wider not for profit sector, do not have a culture of setting aside funds to invest in building individual or organisational capacity. Delivery of mission is dependent on significant

amounts of ‘sweat equity’ from employees, which results in people being both stressed-out and time-poor.

Time-poverty was the challenge most often referred to by the pilot group. Asking people to invest considerable time at the outset of collaboration in relationship building and in pursuing agreement around shared vision and purpose, timelines and costs is therefore extremely difficult.  In addition to time and money, external technical assistance is more than likely to be needed. so making a realistic assessment of all the different competencies and skills that will be required, and deciding whether they exist in-house or whether they need to be recruited eternally, is an important resourcing issue.

# 6. The role of Technical Assistance (TA)[56]

## "Knowledge is of two kinds: we know a subject ourselves, or we know where we can find information upon it"

**Samuel Johnson**

When MMM first started to try and raise funds in order to follow through the recommendations made in its 2007 report, 'Towards a healthy ecology of Arts and Culture', it approached one major Foundation well know for it support of the UK arts and cultural sector for a grant towards the costs of the collaborative working pilots strand. It summarised the request for funding thus:

*"[MMM] will aim to investigate the challenges and opportunities of developing back office consolidations and new kinds of joint ventures in order to understand how such working practices may be use more widely in the sector in order to free up capacity, enable cost savings and improve delivery and experience of great art.*

*We will publicise a call nationally, for expressions of interest from arts and cultural organisations who are already thinking about or designing and planning a collaborative working or shared service project within an existing group, or who are in the early delivery stages of a project of this kind or who have a clear and compelling case to share services.*

*Working with a representative group of MMM's principal stakeholders, a short listing process based on concept viability, regional spread, sector groupings (e.g. museums, localities, venue based organisations etc) will take place in order to identify a first phase of pilots.*

*MMM will then offer the pilot group support in two phases:*

[56] The American phrase 'Technical Assistance' (TA) is used here to describe the expertise and support that arts and cultural organisations need in order to successfully progress their collaborative work.

- *a short planning and costing phase which will identify the planning, operational and evaluation support and technical assistance required for each pilot.*
- *a structured and expert support package over a period of two year, which will assist pilots in the shaping and/or delivery of the collaborative working or shared service project.*

*A learning community amongst the pilot group will be formed and the experiences and lessons learned shared widely across the British arts and cultural sector."*

The response from the Foundation's specialist arts committee was immediate and firm. *'No'* they said. As far as they were concerned the proposition was all about lining the pockets of 'a whole bunch of consultants'. Thankfully, that view was not shared by other public and private funders. Had it been, the six pilots that MMM was able to support between 2008 and 2010 would never have got off the ground and this guide would never have been written.

That experience, however, offers an example of a mindset that prevails across the not for profit arts and cultural sector. Identified by MMM during its last phase of work[57], it is present among arts and cultural organisations as much as funders. This mindset prioritises short-termism over and above the long-term development of broader organisational and financial resilience. Expenditure on external expertise to help organisations evolve working and financial practices that enable adaptivity and innovation in the light of, for example new technology or global financial collapse, is seen as an expensive luxury. It is a mindset that has led to the levels of overextension and undercapitalisation referred to earlier and is one that needs to change urgently if the UK's arts and cultural ecology is to survive and thrive in the face of the challenges ahead.

Nevertheless, in recognition of the prejudice held by many in the arts world against consultants, MMM uses the American phrase, 'Technical Assistance' (TA) to describe

[57] http://www.missionmodelsmoney.org.uk/papers/towards-a-healthy-ecology/

the kinds of expert support that arts and cultural organisations would need to source in order to successfully progress their collaborative working processes.

Ahn[58] sets the context well: *"While collaborative working processes are used within organisations, there are distinctions unique to collaborations involving multiple organisations. The stabilising factors that are more or less developed within an organisation are missing. There are no clear lines of accountability, communication or performance standards. The organisational context that usually supports activity has to be created anew for a third entity and this requires TA practitioners that are experienced in working with these conditions as well as providing the appropriate skill sets. For instance, negotiation/mediation providers, or collaboration "facilitation" providers specialise in this work. Such TA must be discerned from TA that is centered on helping individual organisations."* [59]

Experience from the pilots bore out three further observations made by Ahn about TA in his study:

*"Diagnostics are useful in selecting TA, as one size does not fit all: Collaborations differ based on what they are trying to accomplish, and therefore their TA needs may vary accordingly. For example, a collaboration that brings together similar nonprofits in shared office space may need an outside expert versed in group dynamics, whereas a collaboration involving organisations with large memberships may need a community relations/public relation's consultant to help explain the collaboration to key stakeholders;*

*Collaboration often requires multiple consultants: TA is so varied that it is rare for individual TA providers to have all the necessary skills to address the continuum of needs that emerge throughout the phases of collaboration. Multiple consultants are necessary, but the question of how nonprofit organisations can absorb and manage these consultants remains a difficult one;*

[58] Ahn, R. (2006) Nonprofit/Nonprofit Collaboration in Boston, Barr Foundation Report, November

[59] http://www.barrfoundation.org/usr_doc/Nonprofit-Nonprofit_Collaboration_in_Boston_-_Barr_Foundation__November_2006_.pdf

*TA needs to be carefully sequenced: There is a sequence in collaboration—from coming to agreement to collaborate, through implementation and evaluation. TA must be matched to different "stages" of the collaborative process."*[60]

All the MMM pilot groups anticipated the need for some form of TA during the course of their collaboration, preferring to identify their needs one step at a time. Project management was identified as the greatest immediate need, a finding that is perhaps unsurprising given the over-extension and undercapitalisation of many organisations in the sector: *"the biggest single thing is to make sure you have got project management, committing to staff to be able to mediate and support the process. In the end, the rest of it is about chemistry and timing, and the state the particular organisations are in and their perceptiveness",* observed one participant.

The style and quality of project management needed was very clearly recognised: *"You have to be a driving force, not simply a co-ordinating or administrative function,"* remarked one participant. Indeed, those pilots that worked with individual or group project management expertise at this level were able to progress noticeably faster than those who chose to self-organise using internal resources:

*"Fascinating as this project is, it isn't primarily about artistic drivers. It is about a secondary, hugely important supporting function. Where collaborations have worked most productively, in my experience has been when it has been about the art, because you will all get fired up and you will make sure it happens. So it was easy I think, for us (Chief Executives) to absent ourselves and think 'well the marketing heads will now take this on'. And they will equally have been respectful of each other, in not wanting to be too pushy and so we kind of had it at two levels Had there been a project manager, someone who is there to make the collaboration work… by beating them with sticks, we might have been able to move more quickly.*

*"We went through so many meetings which fundamentally had good material in them, but the meeting finished, we all went off and coped with whatever disasters,*

[60] ibid

*and then we came back and were almost back to square one when we got together again."*

*"we have appointed (x), who is a very clever guy who has brought some great ideas to the table, but the one thing he doesn't have is any leadership ability whatsoever. And in fact we never made that a criterion… But actually all the slowness, the fact that we haven't managed to galvanise this thing to happen at the right speed, is partly because he is not driving it."*

A number of other useful points were made by participants in the pilots on the subject of project management:

- External project management can help establish the 'neutrality' of the collaboration, and ensure that no one organisation is in charge or dominating the others – especially where there are a variety of sizes and types of organisations involved.
- Whilst establishing the shared aims and objectives of the collaboration and ensuring that everyone feels engaged and involved is the responsibility of the Board and the Executive of the organisations involved, effective project management can help to establish the collective responsibility and accountability needed for successful collaboration and provide the impetus for action.
- Strong project managers can be the drivers of change and central point for communication. However, over reliance on project managers can be a problem, if staff feel disempowered or reluctant to take on responsibilities because they think the project manager will step in.
- Consistently ensuring that there are a range of champions from different organisations to lead and drive tasks also helps to develop the shared responsibility of a network and reduces the pressure on individual organisations to find funding to pay for external project managers.

Ensuring that the briefs commissioning TA providers accurately reflected the need of the group in the field of expertise sought was sometimes difficult, especially if the shared vision of the group was in constant evolution, or the purpose of the collaboration unclear or contested. Recruiting the right kind of TA with experience of

collaborative working was not always easy, with word of mouth and previous relationship experience being the preferred route for identifying candidates. Growing the pool of TAs experienced in collaborative working in the arts, for example through specialised mentoring and/or Action Learning sets, and publicising[61] that pool more widely through a technology-enabled platform, was seen as an important step in encouraging more collaborative projects in the sector.

Sometimes TA is provided in house by staff with particular expertise. Where staff in one of the collaborating organisations have the skills, experience and qualifications to advise others on specific issues, sharing through expert groups can lead to dramatic improvements for organisations seeking help. The sharing of policies and procedures is often simple and effective, simply requiring a discussion and willingness to share documents and approaches. In one pilot, this was particularly effective for risk registers, business continuity planning and employment contracts. Often, staff have contacts within their profession and can draw in other external experts free of charge to discuss issues and options with the group. The payback for those external experts in some cases is the opportunity to present their knowledge and expertise to a significant group of cultural organisations that may take up their services in the future. This has been the case in one pilot, which makes extensive use of the staff's own expert contacts to provide free sessions on everything from pensions and employment law to waste management and energy efficiency, to mobile technology and risk management.

In other cases, specialists need to be bought in to work on collaborative projects where there is not enough in-house expertise and/or capacity to take forward an idea or project. Additional research is sometimes required to provide a common and robust understanding of an issue and provide recommendations or practical support to deliver a project. These are genuine additional costs which organisations must either share and commit to or find resources for externally.

An external and critical eye is an important part of collaboration, as those providing

[61] MMM will publicise those TA providers who worked with the pilots as part of the legacy of the programme. Its plans for a peer led knowledge transfer network will also respond to the desire for more peer to peer support structures offering access to expertise in collaborative working.

technical assistance may have experience far beyond the immediate project or joint working that they are supporting.  Being able to bring outside perspectives can be useful in helping to focus the minds of those collaborating on what they are doing, why and how.

Two of the pilots chose to set up sub-group structures around key themes such as programming, professional development, environment, innovation, fundraising and public engagement. Scoping exercises were then conducted with TA specialists in the sub-group fields with digital, marketing and environmental expertise in high demand. Facilitation expertise was also used by all the groups in a variety of ways, sometimes for crystallising the purpose of the collaboration, and sometimes to tease out greater understanding of key areas such a digitisation, where the knowledge and experience base differed across the group. In one instance, the project manager also acted as the primary facilitator. However, none of the groups chose to use facilitation to develop the 'soft skills' needed of successful collaborative working, such as building trust and mutual respect, or resolving conflict.

# 7. The values created by successful collaboration

## "If you want to build a ship, don't drum up people to collect wood and don't assign them tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea."

**Antoine de Saint-Exupery**

Improved organisational effectiveness, reduced duplication, better use of resources and more value for money tend to be the most frequently cited reasons for considering collaboration in the not for profit sector, and the goals that are of most interest to public and private funders. At the time of writing[62], austerity measures brought in by the UK's new Coalition Government are pritoritising the need to cut costs above all else and talk of collaboration and mergers is gathering strength as a solution to the drastic reductions in public sector financing, not only of arts and culture but across the public sector and civil society.

Yet as noted earlier, the MMM pilots offer insight into a much broader spectrum of values being created by collaborative working, ones that accrue both to the individual and the larger systems of which they are part. They are the values that illuminate the often forgotten fact that learning is a social experience – humans learn best when in relationship with others who share a common practice. According to Margaret Wheatley, "*these 'communities of practice' demonstrate that as people find each other and exchange ideas, good relationships develop and a community forms. This community becomes a rich market place where knowledge and experience are shared. It also becomes an incubator where new knowledge, skills and competencies develop.*" [63]

The pilot participants found these other values emerging, creating the 'compost' for successful collaboration to take root and offering many more positive outcomes over and above the organisational and financial efficiences generally prioritised:

[62] July 2010

[63] Wheatley, M.J. (2002) Supporting Pioneering Leaders as Communities of Practice: How to Rapidly Develop New Leaders in Great Numbers ( http://www.margaretwheatley.com/articles/supportingpioneerleaders.html)

### Re-affirmation of vision and mission

*"the whole MMM process articulated and re-grounded us in the things that we collectively care about and reminded us how everything else has to take its place besides that."*

### Release of new energy

*"New conversations are emerging within organisations, because of the involvement of the middle management level of all the organisations. And there are interesting conversations through the continuing working groups that were reshaped and increased through the MMM pilot project: it has got people thinking about other areas."*

### Opportunity to learn

*"It will have brought the companies all up to a comparable level of knowledge and expertise… developing new awareness."*

*"It is valuable to have the time for reflection and ideas – things that we don't get the opportunity for as an organisation"*

*"There is quite extensive experience of collaboration among individual members of the group on a one to one basis. What the MMM project has done is to move that to another level… a much wider collaboration across all the membership where, in order to play a meaningful part, people have had to be open, transparent and compromise in order to move to where we are now."*

### Opportunity to innovate

*"The project has allowed us to be flexible and to explore areas that as a company we might not have, and routes we might not have gone down. That has been for me the most interesting aspect to it… It may well open up an additional way into the organisation that we have never really had the opportunity of exploring before."*

*"It is producing a range of results that you could only produce by having a group of organisations involved… In that sense it is innovative – you could not produce these kinds of results by individual people going after their own goals."*

*"The collaborative group is very like an innovation company – like an R&D company."*

*"There is actually quite a lot of innovation already – like the whole customer relationship management system discussion. Certainly one or two of us are considering using that system… interesting conversations about working with a wider group of partners and European investment money, in terms of how we think about this. More ideas on the table.*

*"Everybody seems to accept that the integration of innovation across all functions would not have happened without the collaboration"*

*"I think the value of collaborative working has been established unquestionably… the value of respect and of listening… the value of key areas like innovation you know – ideas of how you achieve not just genuine ambitions, but how you define yourself competitively, which is very important to us."*

### Generating and enhancing influence

*"The group has demonstrated that it is able to act collectively and to represent itself collectively. That has turned out to be a more important card than everybody might think, because there is so much chaos and disorganisation around."*

*"The conversations we have been having with stakeholders are ones that we would not have had before. People who never returned my calls before are wanting to talk to us now in the way that they didn't bother before. That is very significant."*

*"Quite frankly I think we probably have more chance of success in applying our ideas because of the group's strength."*

# 8. Assessing healthy collaboration

## "In reality, creativity has always been a highly collaborative, cumulative and social activity in which people with different skills, points of view and insight share and develop ideas together"

**Charles Leadbeater**

Collaboration amongst not for profits, including those in the arts and cultural sector, tend to have similar structures, are formed for a definable universe of reasons, and tend to go through similar developmental stages[64] A simple framework, inspired by Hansen[65] and developed in response to learning from the pilots, has been designed, with public and private funders in the UK in mind, so that they might use it as a guide to assess the prospects of healthy collaboration amongst the creative practitioners and organisations they fund and support.

### Step 1: Evaluate opportunities for collaboration

**Establish levels of experience in collaborative working**

- Is there a history of collaboration within the group?
- Has the group undertaken an audit of previous collaboration, which summarises purpose, partners and impact?

**Establish assets and CQAs that will help collaborative working succeed**

- Has the group assessed and articulated the levels of collaborative CQAs present within each participating organisation?
- Has the group identifiable assets[66] that can support collaborative working?

**Create a relevant collaborative working proposition**

[64] http://www.lapiana.org/downloads/RealCollaboration.PDF

[65] Hansen, M.T. (2009) 'Collaboration', Harvard Business School Publishing

[66] See MMM Asset Categories

- Is there a clear articulation of how the proposed collaboration will result in the realisation of collective vision and better delivery of individual mission and strategic goals?
- In what ways will it benefit the communities the group serves?

## Step 2. Spot barriers to collaboration

### Self-knowledge in relation to collaborative working

- Is the group clear about what they learned from previous collaborations?
- Does the group have evidence of sufficient levels of collaborative CQAs amongst its members, which will enable them to collaborate successfully?
- Has the group identified any behavioural, organisational and/or practical barriers that might prevent successful collaborative working?
- Has the reason for collaborating been rigorously interrogated and are the results of that interrogation unequivocal in advocating collaboration as the best way forward?

### Resource needs

- What human and other resources are available within the group to enable collaborative working?
- Has the group identified early stage TA needs and where they could be sourced?

## Step 3. Tailor solutions to tear down the barriers

### Clarify shared vision

- Has a clear vision with strategic objectives been articulated by the group?

### Develop CQAs needed for successful collaborative working

- What proposals does the group have to develop CQAs necessary for successful collaboration?

### Resource the proposed collaboration

- What structures are proposed to support the collaboration?

- What methodologies will be used to manage the collaboration?
- Have roles and responsibilities with the group been clarified?
- What strategies are in place to strengthen accountability within the collaboration?
- In the light of self-assessments made in Stage 2, what TA is likely to be needed and at what stage?

## Step 4. Review and embed the process

### Review progress

- What plans are in place to review the collaboration throughout the first three stages?

### Embed learning

- What resources and supporting structures are planned to embed a collaborative mindset in the group and encourage the development of relevant CQAs?

# 9. Funder strategies to encourage collaborative working

**"Traditionally, many public and private funders of the arts have focused largely on programme funding devoting less attention to the overall organisational health and strength. As the impact of financial and other resource scarcities deepen, funders will need to ensure that their funding practices are flexible and help to develop new ways of sustaining the arts, which build the resilience of those they fund. Encouraging and supporting collaborative working will be one way of achieving those objectives."**

**David Hall, Chief Executive, The Foyle Foundation**

Observations and reflections from pilot participants and recommendations made in the wider literature of non-profit collaboration[67] offer a clear set of interventions that funders could consider in order to encourage and support collaborative working. All of these offer the opportunity for funders to take a leadership role in enabling new ways of thinking and new ways of doing which will evolve the way creative practice is valued, organised and financed.

## Connecting potential collaborators through convening power

As well as financial resources, funders have significant 'convening power' that can be marshaled to catalyse collaborative working. Creating opportunities for individuals and organisations to meet and explore new collaboration ideas through 'bootcamps' or other more traditional kinds of seminar and conference-style events can rapidly build new communities of interest and networks around areas of common interest or concern. Such events could be organised to enable participants to identify for themselves a possible focus for a collaboration, for example through 'open space' approaches, or be structured to attract those interested in something very specific, such as fundraising in a particular locality, or something universally relevant such as resource scarcity and climate change.

[67] Especially http://www.lapiana.org/downloads/RealCollaboration.PDF and http://www.barrfoundation.org/usr_doc/Nonprofit-Nonprofit_Collaboration_in_Boston_-_Barr_Foundation__November_2006_.pdf

### Building on existing assets and encouraging knowledge transfer

Funders could identify where collaborative working is already happening well or beginning to emerge, and provide support to enable it to grow further or faster. They could incentivise knowledge transfer by financing peer-led knowledge networks that enable organisation leaders experienced in collaborative working to share best practice with others starting out. This would help to avoid the 're-inventing the wheel' syndrome, and at the same time build the field in ways that make it easier for this way of working to become more mainstream.

As two pilot participants remarked: *"We are always collaborating, bringing either individual creative people together or collaborating with other organisations, and in the last 12 months we have had half a dozen collaborations on different scales… there is an awful lot of know-how there that could be harnessed"*, and *"The message for funders that I would give is to fund the points of collaboration that already exist or emerge, rather than putting in place a structure, that you hope will deliver that… if they work harder at seeking out at what points of intersection there already are and directing their funding to that, I think that would be a cost effective way of encouraging more collaboration."*

### Supporting the costs of technical assistance (TA)

Funders need to be creative and flexible in how they approach, allocate and distribute grants to support the true costs of collaboration, especially the different kinds of TA needed at different stages, which will be unique to each collaboration. MMM offered each pilot £50,000 to use in whatever way was appropriate to develop the early stage of their collaboration. It was not directive in how the money should be spent, nor in which TA provider was hired or at what cost. It used its network to help identify potential suppliers of TA where it could and advised, if asked, on commissioning documents and briefs. This supportive but unobtrusive role was appreciated by pilot participants and helped to create an ethos of mutual problem solving.

Releasing TA support in alignment with the three stages proposed in section 8 (Evaluating opportunities for collaboration, Spotting barriers to collaboration and Tailoring solutions to tear down the barriers to collaborating), with an emphasis on supporting stages two and three, could encourage groups to ensure that the right

levels of commitment to the shared vision are present and able to drive the collaboration forward. However, it is important that funders have a realistic expectation of the pace at which the collaboration can move forward.

Support for the pilots was enabled by a partnership of three funders, The Northern Rock Foundation, Arts Council England and the then Scottish Arts Council. Similar funder collaboratives are being set up in America[68]with the aim of helping not for profits develop shared back-office professional functions, such as financial oversight, joint purchasing agreements, partnerships or joint ventures in shared enterprises, and, where appropriate, full mergers of established organisations. More funding partnerships of this kind in the UK would help fuel more collaborative endeavours.

MMM would advocate that funders reflect on the learning from the pilot projects and critique their own CQAs to collaborate, both with their peers in the public and private funding community and with others, including those they fund. MMM's 2007 provocation 'The Art of Living'[69] proposed a variety of collaborative responses that public and private funders could make to tackling the arts and cultural sectors endemic overextension and undercapitalisation. These continue to be in urgent need of response, even more so in the light of current operating environment. Collaborative strategies by funders prioritising the building of financial resilience in the arts and cultural sector at this time for example could have significant impact on the sector's ability to survive and thrive in the short term and could effect change much more quickly than individual funders working alone.[70]

[68] http://nonprofitfinancefund.org/announcements/2010/catalyst-fund-created-support-collaboration-shared-ventures-among-npos

[69] http://www.missionmodelsmoney.org.uk/papers/the-art-of-living/

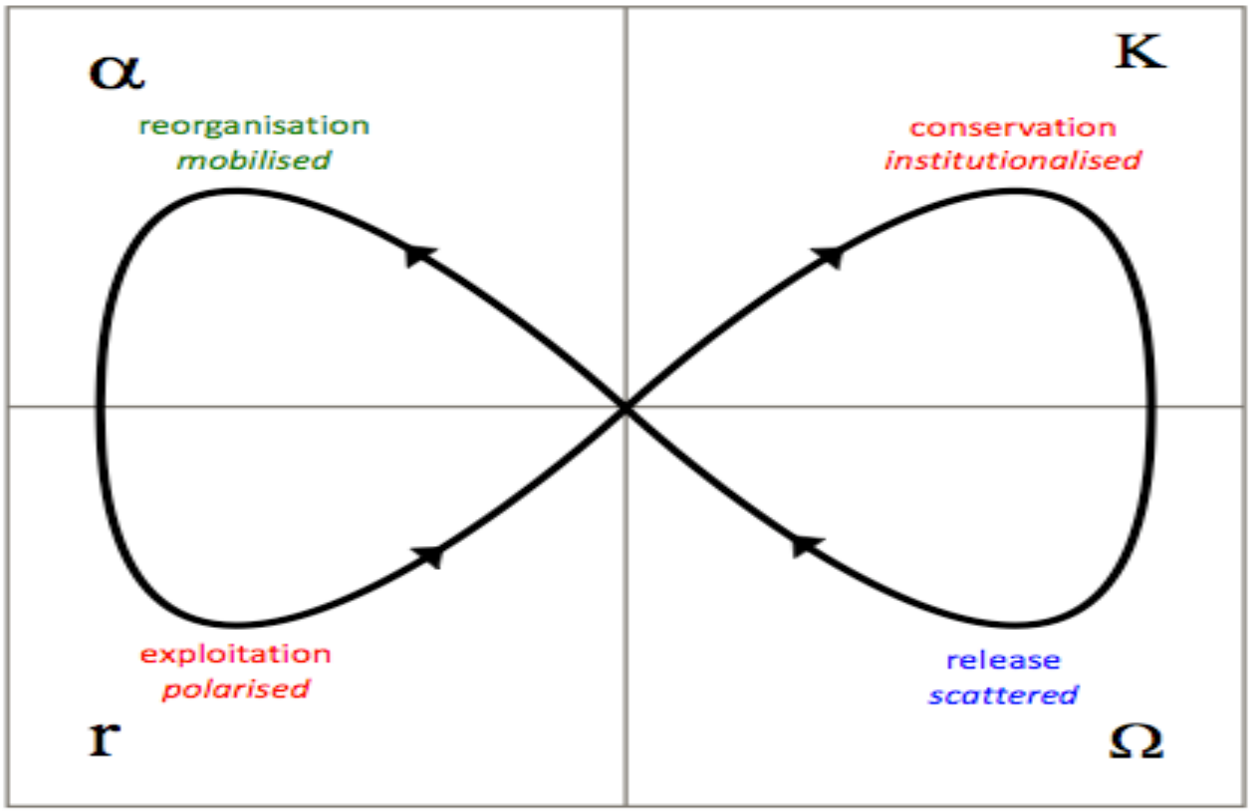
[70] See MMM's Capital Matters research and recommendations for more detail on this

# 10. Conclusion

## "Knowledge of how to combine is the mother of all forms of knowledge; on its progress depends that of all others."

**Alexis de Tocqeville**

Over the course of its fourth cycle of work[71], MMM began to use the concept of resilience as a tool for thinking about the changes it was advocating, including the changes in working practices that the collaborative working pilots illustrate. At its core, resilience is the capacity to experience massive change and yet still maintain the integrity of the original. As with the notion of sustainability, the concept of resilience has traveled from ecological systems theory into social systems theory, bringing with it a simple but powerful visualisation of the adaptive cycle, depicted below - four




continuous stages of change that represent a system's capacity for resilience. This concept is important in the context of arts and cultural organisations, because if the sustainability of our organisations in these increasingly turbulent times is our

[71] 2008-2010

primary goal, then sustainability, at its core, is the capacity to create, test and maintain adaptive capacity.

Like Schumpeter's idea of creative destruction[72], the adaptive cycle requires a period of ''release' after a phase of growth (r) followed by a phase in which that growth is conserved (k), in order to liberate innovation and creativity. Failure to release the creativity for the next phase creates rigidity in the system. Holling[73], the father of resilience thinking called this the 'rigidity trap'.

Understanding the nature and universality of the adaptive cycle helps us realise that no systems, including our organisations, are ever static. Instead, they tend to move dynamically through four recurring phases: the release phase, the re-organisation and renewal stage, the growth/exploitation phase and the conservation phase[74]. The adaptive cycle tells us that unless we release the resources of time, energy, money and skill locked up in our routines and our institutions on a regular basis, it is hard to create anything new or look at things from a different perspective. Without these new perspectives, and the continuous infusion of novelty and innovation, there is a slow but definite loss of resilience, and an increase in rigidity.

Collaboration is, by its very nature, an intervention that straddles the 'release' and 're-organisation' phases of the adaptive cycle. Collaboration forces us to stop seeing only one way of doing things and start seeing all sorts of new ways of doing things. Collaboration releases new energies, which create new opportunities and new connections. Like a forest floor that has been cleared after a fire enabling new life to quickly grow, the reorganisation that collaboration enables can be a heady time of exploration where anything seems possible and the mood is optimistic[75].

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[72] Schumpeter, J. A. (1975) 'Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy' , Harper, New York. First published 1942.

[73] http://www.resalliance.org/1.php

[74] The growth and conservation phases together constitute a relatively long developmental period with fairly predictable, constrained dynamics; the release and reorganisation phases constitute a rapid, chaotic period during which capitals (natural, human, social, built and financial) tend to be lost and novelty can succeed.

[75] Westly et al (2007) Getting to Maybe, Vintage, Canada

The challenge, as the story of these collaborative pilots shows, is that there are a host of other 'traps' that can prevent new energy from taking root, from the idea itself to the hard work of making it real. Sharing and applying the learning about the nature and location of the traps, how to avoid them, or how to get out of them, has been one of the central motivations in telling the stories of MMM's collaborative working pilots. Of equal importance though is a belief in promulgating disciplined collaboration in the arts and cultural sector as a core strategy, not only as a direct response to the immediate challenges of the UK government's austerity measures but as part of the methodology for co-creating[76] the ecologically conscious future we will need to bring into being if our species is to survive. As Margaret Wheatley has so powerfully said: "the world doesn't change one person at a time. It changes as networks of relationships form among people who share a common cause and vision of what's possible."[77]

[76] http://www.maketools.com/articles-papers/Social_Vision_for_Value_CoCreation_in_Design.pdf

[77] Wheatley, M. and Frieze, D. (2006) How Large-Scale Change Really Happens - Working With Emergence (http://margaretwheatley.com/articles/largescalechange.html)

# Appendix 1

The funders supporting the collaborative working pilots each gave MMM a short testament as to their belief in the value of collaborative working:

**Morag Arnot, formerly Acting Chief Executive of The Scottish Arts Council**
*"Through the development and implementation of our quality framework attention has been paid to strengthening the financial and organisational capacity of arts organisations. The overextension and undercapitalisation of the sector needs to be addressed, both by ourselves and by arts organisations themselves especially in the current economic climate. Supporting collaboration, consolidation and other long-term co-operative activities between organisations is one contribution to this critical issue that the Scottish Arts Council is making through its partnership with MMM. We look forward to learning from the pilots about how we can support most effectively changes in working practice through the experiences of this extraordinary cohort of leading Scottish and English arts organisations."*

**Mark Robinson, formerly Executive Director of Arts Council England North East**
*"Learning how to collaborate more effectively is going to be as important for the funding community as it is for arts organisations. Arts Council England wants to be a great funder that makes a difference and encourages resilience not reliance. While this gets more and more critical, at times it can feel as if the environment makes that difficult. But we are up for the challenge and hope we can learn lots from these pilots about the role of funders in collaboration, and how our behaviours and habits might need to change."*

**Paul Rubenstein, formerly Assistant Chief Executive, Newcastle City Council and Jane Robinson, Assistant Chief Executive, Gateshead City Council**
*"Newcastle and Gateshead have been transformed by investment in cultural infrastructure. But this transformation took place when times were good and money from arts and non-arts sources was more readily available than it is today and perhaps for the foreseeable future. This means we have ambitious, dynamic cultural organisations, often housed in fantastic buildings but without the necessary capital to maximise their potential. Our project will, uniquely, explore whether there is a solution to this dilemma working across Newcastle Gateshead. If successful, we hope to lead the way to new, long term models of sustainable expansion in the cultural sector"*

**Penny Vowles, Culture and Heritage Programme, Northern Rock Foundation**
*"The Northern Rock Foundation has long history of investing in capacity building in the non profit sector. We were keen to fund the MMM programme because of its rare focus on organisational and financial resilience in the arts sector and its mission to develop practical and conceptual tools which will help organisations*

*pursue new financial and operating approaches. We hope the ideas being promoted by MMM will become more mainstream and as a result more arts organisations across the UK will be able to respond better to their increasingly complex operating environment."*

# Appendix 2

## MMM: Designing for Transition
### Invitation to participate in collaborative working/shared services pilots
(North East England version)

**1. Context:**

**MMM:Designing for Transition** (Deft) is a change programme. It aims to test ideas for responding and adapting to the numerous and complex trends affecting not for profit arts and cultural organisations, (A&COs) demonstrate what works to the broader field and accelerate infrastructural and organisational transformation in order to better support the creation and experience of great art.

**Vision**
Deft's vision is to transform the way that arts and cultural organisations use their resources to support the creation and experience of great art in the 21st century.

**Ethos**
Deft's purpose is to learn by doing, creating a platform for mutual problem solving where individuals and organisations will work together to find solutions that can be created and shared in ways that emphasise its character as a common good, rather than as something to be owned.

**Mission**
Working directly with A&COs and public and private funders the Deft programme will act as a vector to introduce new practical and conceptual tools, which will help:

- pursue new financial and operating approaches,
- improve funding and infrastructure support systems
- Introduce new kinds of financial capital
- develop the strategic understanding and exploitation of technology innovation
- evolve core competencies and
- communicate our understanding of how we might nurture a healthier arts and cultural ecology.

**Background**
Deft is the fourth phase of the Mission Models Money (MMM) initiative, an independent, sector-led national action research programme and campaign for change which ran from June 2004 to May 2007 which sought to advance new approaches and new solutions to organisational and financial sustainability in the not for profit arts and cultural sector.

**Deft programme**
Seven programme strands have been designed in response to the key recommendations from 'Towards a Healthy Arts and Cultural Ecology' (available at www.missionmodelsmoney.org.uk) and are beginning to be delivered in Scotland and the North East of England. Continuing to relate to the three M's, each is aimed at

help organisations move toward new operating structures and practices that can serve artists more effectively, elevate artistic achievement, and bolster organisational capacity to respond to shifting external realities.

**2. Invitation to participate in the collaborative working/shared services strand**

In preparation for the delivery, Deft is looking for A&COs who are interested in putting themselves forward for consideration as pilots and sites of learning in collaborative working and/or shared services.

MMM's final report 'Toward a healthy arts and cultural ecology" included the following observations and recommendations:

*"There is significant unrealised potential for arts and cultural organisations to leverage their own talents and those of other organisations by working together. The challenges and opportunities of developing mergers, back office consolidations and joint ventures needs to be further investigated. While this is already happening, it should be encouraged further. There are opportunities and significant interest by A&COs in the development of these practices especially around second tier or back office functions and in programme areas such as education and learning but there is very little experience or shared learning of current practice in this area. Since this kind of approach is still rare in the arts and cultural sector delivering a group of carefully chosen pilots will enable additional research to analyse factors that influence success or failure, develop best practice guideline and compile and disseminate information for executive and non executive leaders".*

Expressions of interest are sought from organisations that are already considering developing collaborative working or shared services ideas with others. As identified in MMM's final report these could either be around the traditional back office functions of IT, finance, HR and joint procurement and purchasing or they could be more focussed on programmatic or public engagement themes.

(NB this strand of Deft's programme has already begun in Scotland with 3 collaborative groups already piloting joint working: The five National Performing Companies, the twenty three members of the Scottish Literature Forum and the twelve Edinburgh Festivals.)

**3. Pre-selection criteria and short-listing process**

MMM is seeking cultural organisations

- who are *already thinking about* or designing and planning a collaborative working or shared service project within an existing group, or
- who are *in the early delivery stages of a project of this kind* or
- who *have a clear and compelling case* to for working collaboratively and/or sharing services

We are also keen to hear from existing groups and networks currently working on projects of this nature in order that lessons learned are more widely shared both within the MMM:Designing for Transition cluster of pilots and more widely across the sector.

Working with a representative group of Deft's principal stakeholders, a short-listing process based on concept viability, region spread, sector groupings (e.g. museums, localities, venue based organisations etc) will take place in January of 2009 in order to identify up to three pilots.

MMM:Designing for Transition will then offer the pilot group support in two phases:

- a short scoping phase which will clarify the focus and timeframe of the pilot and seek to identify the planning, operational and evaluation support and technical assistance required
- access to a structured and expert support package over an agreed period, which will assist pilots in the shaping and/or delivery of the collaborative working or shared service project.

A learning community amongst the pilot group will be formed and the experiences and lessons learned shared widely across the UK's arts and cultural sector.

**4. Deadline for response**

Arts & Cultural organisations interested in putting themselves and their groups forward for consideration should send a short email to: clare.cooper@deft.org.uk identifying the group, the aims of the collaborative working and/or shared service project and describing what stage it is at in terms of development and planning by 31st December 2008. Decisions on which groups will go forward into the Deft pilot will be made by 31st January 2009.

**5. Criteria for selection**

MMM:Designing for Transition have already embarked on three collaborative working/share services pilots in Scotland. The five National Performing Companies are developing shared digital and broadcast platforms which will enable a major step change in public engagement, the twelve Edinburgh Festivals are looking at joint working in six core areas which will develop the global competitive edge of Edinburgh's Festivals and the Literature Forum for Scotland will deliver a new Literature strategy for Scotland via new ways of collaborating within the forum and across sectors.

The following criteria for selection have been informed by our learning there.

- Levels of clarity and ambition for the pilot
- Commitment to engaging the whole organisation
- Commitment to sharing findings of the pilot through case study and other dissemination and advocacy in line with MMM's self-help ethos with the wider arts and cultural sector
- Evidence of an understanding of the challenges of partnership and levels of commitment to collaborative working

**6. Decision making panel**

Representatives from Arts Council England, The Northern Rock Foundation, Nstar and MMM will form the decision making panel.

**7. Further information**

You can telephone Clare Cooper who is leading the Deft initiative on 07914 375226 for any further clarification you need.

**8. Resource partnership.**
Deft's Collaborative Working/Shared Services pilot is enabled through funding committed by Arts Council England North East and the Northern Rock Foundation and expertise offered from both funders and MMM's own growing network of specialists in a variety of relevant areas.

# Appendix 3

## Summary of MMM's 2008-2010 Collaborative Working Pilots

Six groups were chosen to participate in the MMM Collaborative Working Pilots through a competitive invitation process[78]. Decisions on the final six - three in Scotland and three in the North East of England – were made by MMM and the public and private funders who had put up the money to run the pilots. Each pilot was offered £50,000 to advance their proposed collaboration in ways they saw appropriate. Advice, support and some facilitation was offered by MMM, which primarily took the role of 'participant observer' in order to gain a close and intensive familiarity with the groups and their practices over an extended period of time.[79] By attending meetings with the groups, accessing documentation about the developing collaborations and conducting two series of interviews across the group, MMM built up a body of material which has been used to prepare six case studies, a guide for arts organisations and this guide for public and private funders. Two further collaborations involving MMM - the ERA21 Group[80] and the Intelligent Funding Group[81] - also informed this guide.

### Collaborative Working Pilots In Scotland

The five **National Performing Arts Companies** - Scottish Ballet, Scottish Opera, National Theatre of Scotland, Royal Scottish National Orchestra and Scottish Chamber Orchestra are focusing on the development of a shared web presence to enable a step-change in public engagement opportunities, focusing initially on social media and ancillary content, such as interviews, talks, and behind the scenes videos. Simon Woods, Chief Executive of The Royal Scottish National Orchestra said at the start: "Learning how to work well together across a whole range of disciplines and organisational structures will be one of the hallmarks of successful arts businesses in the 21st Century. At a time of economic uncertainty, deploying collaborative solutions to joint challenges and opportunities is a pre-requisite for survival. We hope that other groups of arts organisations will be encouraged to work together in similar ways."

**The Literature Forum for Scotland** includes The Association for Scottish Literary Studies, Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals in Scotland (CILIPS), The Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA), Edinburgh International Book Festival, Edinburgh UNESCO City of Literature, The Gaelic Books Council, Itchy Coo, Moniack Mhor, National Association for Literature Development (NALD), National Library of Scotland, Playwrights' Studio Scotland,

[78] See Appendix 1 for more detail on the competitive invitation process

[79] The method originated in the field work of social and cultural anthropology

[80] http://www.missionmodelsmoney.org.uk/programme/era21/

[81] http://www.missionmodelsmoney.org.uk/programme/intelligent-funding/

Publishing Scotland, Scots Language Centre, Scottish Book Trust, Scottish Language Dictionaries, Scottish Society of Playwrights, Scottish PEN, Scottish Poetry Library, Scottish Storytelling Forum, Society of Authors in Scotland and the University of Glasgow. They are focusing on delivering a new strategic vision for Literature in Scotland, exploring a more radical framework for the development, delivery and sustainability of the vision and its planned outcomes. Douglas Gifford, Chairman of the Literature Forum, said: "Transition is a major theme in the arts and cultural world in Scotland just now and the Forum has seized the timely opportunity offered by the MMM programme to evolve and transform not only its own collaborative practices but its capacity to work with other partners. As a result we expect to be able to respond powerfully and effectively in the service of Literature to the opportunities offered by the changes around us."

**Festivals Edinburgh**, on behalf of the twelve Edinburgh Festivals (Bank of Scotland Imaginate Festival, Edinburgh Art Festival, Edinburgh Festival Fringe, Edinburgh International Book Festival, Edinburgh International Festival, Edinburgh International Film Festival, Edinburgh Jazz and Blues Festival, Edinburgh International Science Festival, Edinburgh Mela, Edinburgh's Hogmanay, Edinburgh Military Tattoo and the Scottish International Storytelling Festival), is working strategically in six core areas in order to develop the global competitive edge of Edinburgh's Festivals. On joining the Pilot, Faith Liddell, Director of Festivals Edinburgh, said**:** "Edinburgh is the world's greatest Festival City. The means of maintaining and strengthening that identity over the coming years lies in making the whole of the Festival ecology greater than the sum of its unique parts. Our collaborative journey has only just begun but already it is reaping significant rewards across all our areas of current mutual interest; marketing, technology, fundraising and partnership, programming, environmental issues and professional development. We're learning and growing as individual organisations and as a group and we look forward to sharing our story and giving others courage."

## Collaborative Working Pilots In the North East of England

**Newcastle Gateshead Cultural Venues** is a collaboration between BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Dance City, The International Centre for Life, Live Theatre, Northern Stage, Seven Stories, The Sage Gateshead, Theatre Royal, Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums and Tyneside Cinema. The group has worked together informally at Chief Executive level for many years (as Gateshead Newcastle Arts Forum) and played a key role in the decade of culture-led regeneration of NewcastleGateshead. On being invited to participate by MMM in 2008, Jim Beirne, Chief Executive of Live Theatre, said: "Investment in NewcastleGateshead's cultural infrastructure over the last decade has been transformative, bringing not only international recognition, but increased regional aspiration as well. Our challenge now, given a likely reduction in public spending and structural changes taking place in the wider environment, is to develop new financial strategies to maximise the value derived from this capital investment and enable our arts organisations to achieve their full potential. Our collaborative response to this challenge is both bold and replicable in other city regions such as ours."

As an MMM pilot, the group extended and deepened their collaboration, focussing on four key themes: capitalising on physical assets and diversifying income streams,

moving people across public engagement thresholds to deepen their involvement with their work and organisations, exploring shared services (finance, facilities, human resources) and becoming digitally effective to increase engagement, participation and revenue. Now, beyond the pilot stage they are building on these areas and also working together around development, learning and participation and creative programming. NGCV has evolved into a partnership involving a wide range of staff in practical joint working, as well as engaging stakeholders and opinion formers at a strategic level. Renaming and redefining themselves in 2009, the Chief Executives said; "NGCV exists to maximise the artistic and economic potential of the cultural sector in the North East. It achieves this by developing strategic and creative initiatives, by sharing practice and resources and by being a strong collective voice."

**Exchange,** which comprises BalletLorent, The Empty Space, Name and Northern Stage, is rationalising and re-imagining access to and use of rehearsal and development space for emerging work in the performing arts in the region. Caroline Routh, Co-founder of The Empty Space, said: "Even with the transformation of the cultural infrastructure in the North East region, access to research and development space appropriate for supporting a range of emerging work in the performing and digital arts sector remains limited. In order to encourage optimum health in our arts and cultural ecology the full lifecycle of creative processes needs to be nourished from the grass roots up. Each member of our group is intimately connected to supporting the early stages of creativity and our MMM collaborative pilot will deliver not only a better understanding of those lifecycle needs but a series of nationally relevant strategic responses to the physical space requirements of our target group."

**AV Festival, Northern Lights Film Festival and Tyneside Cinema** are devising ways of sharing a range of back office functions and developing a more collaborative approach to programming and public engagement. Rebecca Shatwell, Director of AV Festival, explained: "This unique grouping of Newcastle-based film and media arts organisations, all leaders in their respective fields are poised to enter new phases of growth. Enhancing our shared back-office functions around volunteers, fundraising and finance, and expanding this collaborative way of working to artistic programming and public engagement, seems a natural evolution of our collective mission. Participating in the MMM programme has given us access to the financial and other resources we will need to succeed and turn our story into a model for others to follow."

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