

***Leadership Development for Artists/Practitioners:***

**Evaluation Report For  
Cultural Leadership Programme**

**from**

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***Method:* a pilot bespoke programme of leadership  
development for artists/practitioners in the cultural and  
creative sector**

**May – November 2009**

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## 1. Executive Summary

Supported by the Cultural Leadership Programme (CLP), and informed by the insights of leading artists, Method was established to act as a responsive, individually-tailored programme for 21 selected professional artists and practitioners. It aimed to offer them the opportunity to develop their leadership effectiveness on their own terms, including through their practice.

Method's core aims were:

- to facilitate and release the potential of creative individuals;
- to explore artistic practice as a form of cultural leadership;
- to generate and support dialogue around artists/practitioners' role in relation to leadership agendas within and beyond the creative and cultural sector.

A pilot programme ran between May and September 2009, over which period 21 artists/practitioners were supported in their leadership development by using a variety of group and individual tools including coaching, mentoring, action learning and networking events.

### **Overall Conclusions and Recommendations:**

(please refer to individual sections for Detailed Recommendations)

- Time - leadership schemes for artists require substantial time to ferment and to bear fruit (at least 12 months in this context). We recommend that for its future provision CLP considers intensive 12 weeks followed by longer period of support.
- Artists and contexts – we suggest CLP consider 3 potential ways to structure future participant involvement with cross over points enabled between the three:
  - emergent artists/recent graduates - in partnership with Universities;
  - mid-career artists - with studios, agencies and artist networks;
  - established artists - with leading high profile cultural venues and institutions
- Networks – are central to enable artist/practitioners to effectively understand the terms of their leadership development; in contrast to those that work in an organisational setting, individual practitioners need networks to build, refine and reflect on their leadership value and profile.
- Enquiry - perhaps differently from other forms of leadership development in the arts and culture sector, artist/practitioner development is as much about open-ended, iterative enquiry as it might be about practical solutions. A credible scheme of this kind, by the very nature of the positions of its participants, will generate more questions than answers. Much of the skill is in enabling participants to focus on what are the most useful ones, for them, at any particular time, whilst ensuring the programme is strongly aware of the wider environment.
- Multipliers - a substantial number of agents, operatives, thinkers, practitioners and contributors, from a very broad national range, enhanced Method's content. As a reflection of interest in artists and leadership the level of contribution and engagement from those who work with, support or commission artists was very high. Any future scheme could look to build this network or consider more formalised ways to engage multipliers - e.g. through artist studio networks. Our appendix lists these leaders and agents.
- Bespoke, responsive and flexible – the implications: without set paths for artists leadership development, any provision offered outside of organisations to individual practitioners needs to be responsive to their particular, emerging and evolving needs if it is to maximise its relevance, engagement and impact. Inevitably, this requires significant management time to deliver and support. This suggests higher levels of investment will be necessary to maintain the quality of the experience and the level of engagement by individual artists and practitioners for whom competition on their time is significant and returns need to be clear and perceived.

## **2 Method Components and Methodology**

The Method team aimed to attract applicants with high aspirations for leadership development and by the quality of track record in their practice. The programme was designed to recruit the overall cohort of 21 artists characterised by its creative mix collective appetite for peer-to-peer learning and networking.

Following a promotion and recruitment process (see Appendix 2) key relationships were offered to each participant, all supported by one of the Method team allocated to each artist in the role of Critical Friend. These relationships were: 1) the coaching, 2) the mentoring 3) Action Learning and 4) broader networking cross art form with the cohort.

Through these relationships the Method team sought to achieve a set of outcomes:

- informative artists' feedback;
- growing conversation;
- scalability;
- advocates for leadership development among artists/practitioners;
- advocates for CLP among artists/practitioners;
- practical 'toolkits' for future programmes;
- buddy programme for next cohort;
- learning 'flow' from first studio visit to final exit interview.

In reaching towards these outcomes the Method Team created and facilitated the key components:

### **Coaching**

Each participant offered a minimum of three coaching sessions with an Accredited Coach. These explored their aspirations for the programme and enabled them to explore and interrogate their leadership journey.

### **Mentorship**

Mentors were identified as either another creative individual or an individual from within an organisation. The mentors were identified by the participants in conjunction with the Method management team. In most cases, the participants met with their mentor three times during the pilot, at the earliest possible stage, midway and towards the end of the programme. See details of mentors in appendix.

### **Critical Friend support**

Each participant in the programme was allocated a critical friend from within the management team. The cohortees were matched according to best fit of experience to the artist and their role was as a regular point of support for the artists throughout the programme, maximising learning potential and allowing for opportunities and connections to be built. The critical friend brokered the Mentor for each of the participants, approaching, identifying and securing the Mentors. The Critical Friend role is where the three aims of Method were brought together.

### **Events**

Method convened two events at the open and close of its programme, at which the cohort could meet, share experiences and reflect upon their learning. The events were primarily designed to build the learning and sharing across the cohort and build the participant relationships with each other. They also introduced the cohort to ideas about artist/practitioner leadership through a series of presentations and keynote speeches from a range of high-profile artists and practitioners differently positioned throughout the arts and cultural sector. These inputs were critical to broaden and stretch the dialogue, enable the cohort to rapidly key in to common themes and hot topics, and to encourage reflection and action as the richest possible context was being built and awarenesses shared.

### **Broader Conversations on Artists Leadership**

The Method management team negotiated key complementary Conversation events aimed at underpinning the leadership learning journey for the participants and addressing specific themes and were held in partnership with leading organisations. (See list of participating speakers and contributors in appendix). The key events were:

- **Artist/practitioner leadership and Entrepreneurship**

In partnership with CreateKX at the British Library, Method convened a round table analysing whether and how artist/practitioners might engage with ideas around entrepreneurship to support their practice and ideas in the context of an increasingly fast-changing and unstable funding and business environments. A range of perspectives were offered, from artists, producers and consultants working across public and commercial funding contexts, and in a range of media.

- **Artists/practitioner leadership and Academia**

London Centre for Arts and Cultural Exchange and Method examined what role there is in society for artists as leaders – what kind of legitimacy do they have and what kind of social and political capital might artists adopt. It also explored the question that if ‘we’ have a place round the table as creative industries what is the role for artists? The role of artists as leaders within the University sector was also covered at this session held in an exemplar venue of artists cultural leadership at the Heritage Moorings at St Katherine’s dock. A tour of these floating artists led studios and living accommodation was held afterwards

- **Artists, producers and leadership**

*Parlour Culture* examined the role of the producer or intermediary, both as a leader within the creative and cultural sector and as individuals who hold the keys to the future leadership position of artists and practitioners with whom they work. Parlour Culture is a project supported by the Cultural Leadership Programme under Meeting the Challenge and the Lead Advisor is John Kieffer. Two of the lead producers within Parlour Culture attended the event with John Kieffer and 11 of the Method participants. Hosted by the Jerwood Space the event tackled the questions of what each of the participants on both programmes (Method and Meeting the Challenge) could do to “get better at what we do”, to address their own leadership trajectory and share any common routes or tools. The event was specifically designed to introduce the Method participants to another strand of work from the Cultural Leadership Programme.

## **Action Learning**

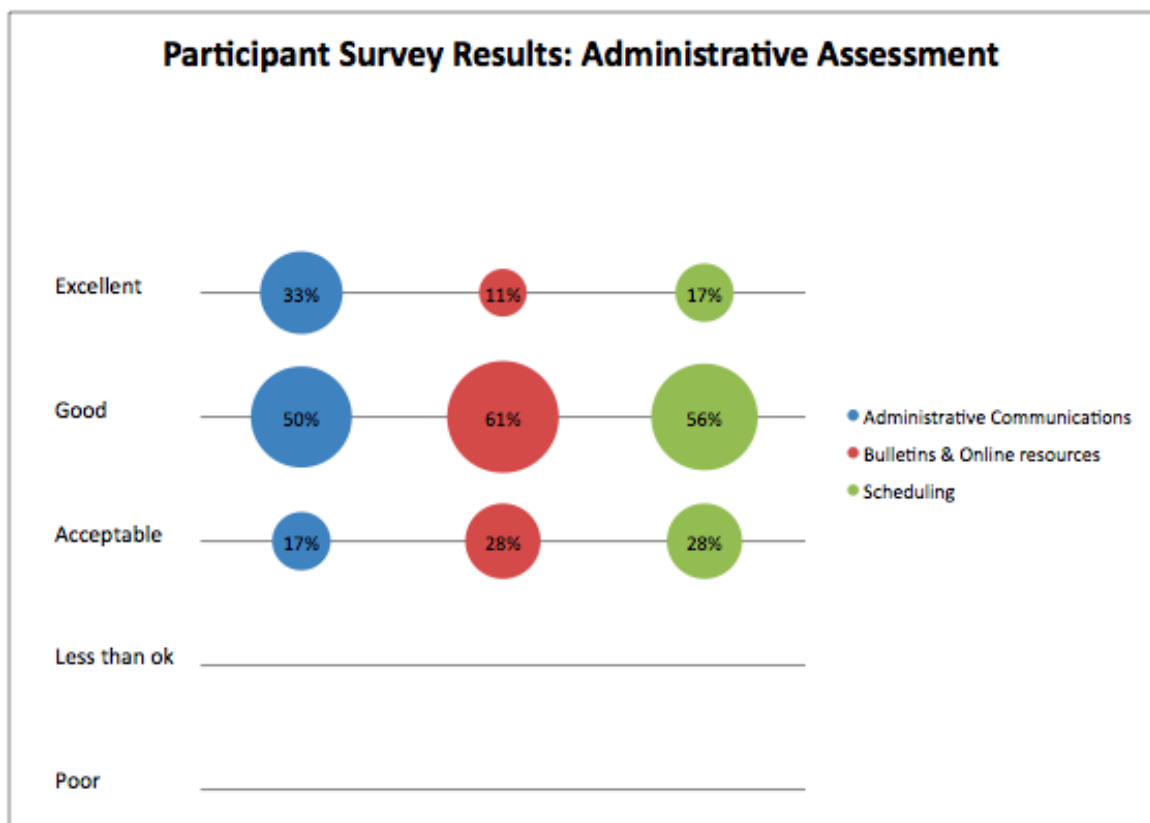
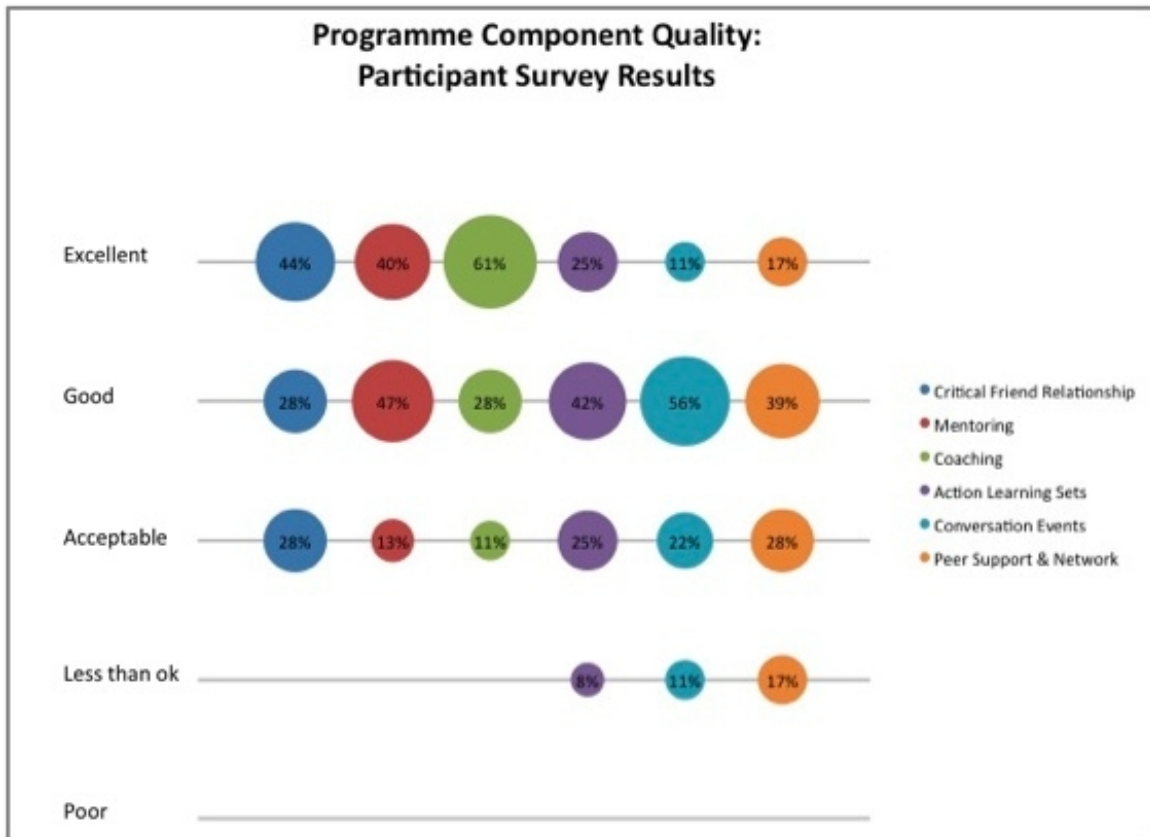
This complement was introduced as a leadership tool and reflective device to the participants by Sian Prime and Hilary Jennings, both qualified action learning set facilitators. The primary aim of the sessions was for the cohort to travel forward in their understanding of artist/practitioner leadership potential with facilitated sessions

## **Artist Advisory Group**

Method ‘tested’ the aims and process with four advisors. Two meetings were held, one at the outset of the programme and one at the end. The meetings provided valuable context and independent exploration of the viability and scalability of the Method Programme. Their thoughts were factored into the recommendations in this report. The formal advisors were: Chris Wainwright, Artist and Head of Chelsea, Wimbledon and Camberwell Colleges of Art; Grace Adam; Artist and Director of Cape Farewell, David Buckland and Mark Waugh, Director of A Foundation. Additionally the Method team consulted informally with a broad range of artists and creative practitioners in advance of conceiving and proposing the Method to CLP. These informal network consultations guided the values, structure, concept and package for Method and were invaluable at the early stage of programme development in ensuring that the ‘offer’ was attractive to artists and would serve its purpose.

### 3. Feedback from the cohort

Survey results indicate that overall satisfaction, enjoyment and engagement from participants in the delivery of the programme was very high.



3 key points communicate themselves within the broad patterns of participant responses. These are:

**Cohort members supported Method's responsive, bespoke approach and its mix of components – especially where these interrelate and enhance each other**

- participants recognise the value of taking lead responsibility with defining the terms of their own development, and are not uncomfortable with approaches that generate 'as many questions as answers'

*"I believe that the Method Leadership Programme has been very important to my professional development and that it may even have a long-term effect on my ways of thinking and interacting. The Programme was successful primarily because it was formulated by three people with an immense amount of professional knowledge and commitment but who also had an unusual willingness to learn from others. There seemed to be a core belief (filtering out from them to us as a group) that we could help each other by complementing each other's skills base and knowledge. In my view this led to a healthy attitude of camaraderie that permeated the enterprise."* Rebecca Fortnum

**Offering a process that put participants at the centre powerfully and substantially built levels of confidence among participants, and conveyed an empowering sense of legitimacy to their professional lives**

- these benefits has been strongly communicated by cohort members at many different points and in different ways. Sample quotes include:
- *"Method provided me with a A feeling of acknowledged seriousness – that what I do is important"* Julie Freeman
- *"Just being accepted onto a scheme like this has transformed the way I see myself"*, Tassos Stevens
- *"I have come to terms with the fact that I have an abundance of experience and ability and the question is not how to learn more but what I want to focus on in my practice."* Leo Kay
- *"To download information and ideas from other people, to focus on myself and ask for help for me not a project and to be given permission and a framework to do this has been fantastic."* Anthea Williams
- the implication within this aspect appears to be borne out – artist/practitioners typically follow creatively demanding paths which can be isolating and which feature limited professional development opportunities that are felt to be directly relevant; they can work extraordinarily hard for limited reward, recognition or remuneration; they can be unsure of what professional support they need, and where it can be found, and acknowledge that putting trust in your own creative intuition has risks:
- *"Working as an artist 'trying to make it' both financially and creatively is a constant challenge and easy to get lost in – forgetting the creative process which made me an artist in the first place."* Zory

**Participants challenged traditional notions of leadership, and were keen to critically reflect on how ideas around leadership could be re-purposed to have value from the perspectives of artist/practitioners**

- most if not all participants had had limited engagement with ideas and concepts around leadership prior to Method;
- some felt their ability to appreciate relevance of leadership thinking might best be supported from analysis of, and extrapolation from, their current situation, rather than promotion of these ideas in more abstract ways.
- we recognise one of the strong characteristics of many members of an artist/practitioner group will be its enthusiasm for debate, exchange, and critical reflection;
- networks were widely understood as a vital and legitimate and appropriate approach to artist/practitioner development in the wider sense – offering an alternative to market-led approaches with the implication of the role of the individual 'star artist' (about which many participants felt uncomfortable). The complexities of networks, their mutability, affordances of peer support and critical reflection suggest networks as a legitimate and key aspect of artist/practitioner development for the future.

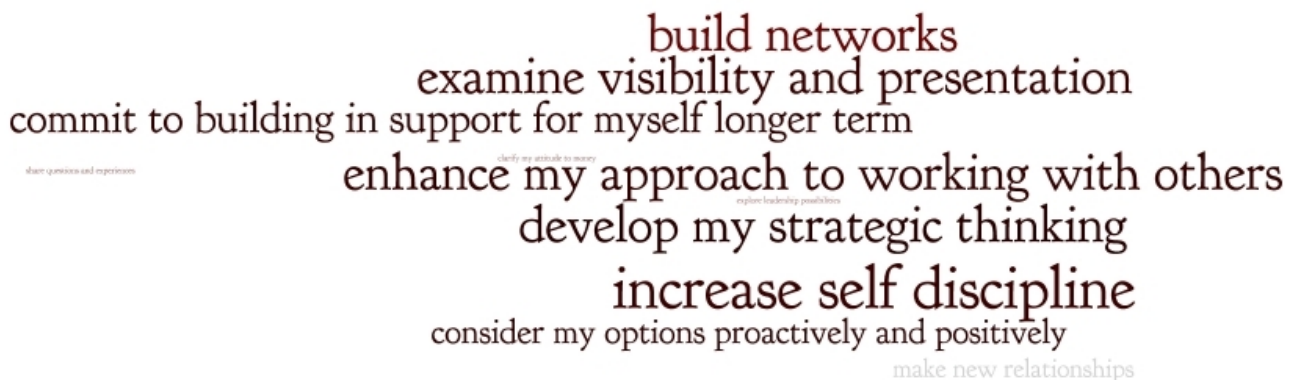
*"....artists appear to lead differently to more top-down, mainstream management styles, preferring instead to act as enablers, collaborators or quiet interventionists. These approaches reflect current thinking in arts practice and are very much counter to the image of the 'heroic' solo figure orchestrating others to achieve*

their vision. However.....the artist's quiet approach may not.....be recognised and valued." Sara Bowler.

**Starting the Journey: some of what the cohort members said they wanted to explore.....**



**Reflections: some of what cohort members said they took from the programme....**



Particular aspects that cohort members indicated as high quality, or pivotal in their appreciation of Method, included:

- the very high quality of the mentors, and their 'huge focussing value';
- the skill levels and specialist knowledge of the coaches;
- the value of the coaching process itself – examination and reflection on habits, the surprise of the process for those unfamiliar to it;
- the steer from the Critical Friends in terms of how to make most use of mentors and coaches.

## **Detailed recommendations for improvement from the cohort**

### **Lengthen the period over which the programme takes place**

- the programme would be much more effective spread over a longer period – 6-12 months minimum
- consider timing across the year - in relation to different art form cycles and the academic responsibilities of some participants;
- consider a follow up review with each participant 6 months after the schemes concludes, to extend learning about impact.

### **Improve cohort recruitment procedures**

- the recruitment window should be longer, and participants more rigorously selected – aiming to raise cohort cohesion, with participants able to support and relate to each other's positions.

### **Make more space for discussion, exchange and networking from the start**

- balance the 'one to many' presentations with more time for round table discussion between cohort members, and with visiting speakers and specialists;
- front-load the programme with more networking exercises, and stronger encouragement to the group to organise informal meet-ups;
- understand that Method only scratched the surface of what leadership means in relation to, and through, artistic practice – consider how to unpack more what leadership might mean in individual artist/practitioner contexts, on participant-led terms;
- find ways to sustain the cohort(s), and connect to subsequent cohort groups.

### **Reflect on how to make the geographical spread work**

- consider how to make scheme elements work for participants who are based a long way from London – perhaps distributed models that are more active locally.

### **Develop the 'Critical Friend' role**

- find more time and room to enable each Critical Friend to become thoroughly conversant in the history and artistic practice of each participant they are paired with,
- make clearer how participants can make best use of their allocated Critical Friend;
- ensure greater regularity to the meetings between artist/practitioner and Critical Friend.

### **Explain further what coaching involves at the start**

- including, possibly, introductions to the contracted coaches at the opening event..

### **Progress the way the mentoring opportunity is extended**

- some participants were frustrated at the time it took to match them most effectively with a mentor, and sometimes confused about the criteria for match making.

### **Tighten the approach to forming Action Learning sets**

- consider more carefully how the composition of each Action Learning Set affects their usefulness to those taking part;
- encourage participants to think more thoroughly in advance about what issues they'd benefit from bringing to the Set.

## **4. Contributor Reflections**

### **4.1 Coaching**

Designed to act as a catalyst for the artists' learning process and complementing the other elements of the Method programme, the coaching sessions enabled the participants to reflect on their own professional practice and ideas drawn from other parts of the programme. The aim was to facilitate their learning into purposeful, practical action. Please note that as all coaching was offered in confidence to coachees, this section of this Report extracts common themes and patterns that can be traced across the cohort, and

#### **4.1.1 Themes and patterns**

The coachees were at first tentative about the potential benefits of coaching, as many had limited experience of how coaching works. For them it was the 'unknown' element, there was a sense of expectation and desire to use the 'tool' to find out more.

In general coaching was used by the cohort to reflect on their career so far and to consider the next stage of their development, how they might plan their future path and focus on longer term goals. Each participant undertook three two hour coaching sessions which were governed by normal coaching confidentiality. The sessions began with coachees' goals for the process and subsequent sessions helped them take practical action to achieve their goal and the final session included a review to help them assess how far they had succeeded in their aims

As commented by one participant the coaching was, "an entirely abstract space to think entirely outside the practice that we kill ourselves over". Many coachees used the coaching to reflect on their career so far and to consider the next stage of their professional development. In the first session they focused on their 'big picture' goals and made plans to achieve these. Between sessions they took action on the first stages of these plans; part of the second and third sessions was devoted to assessing their progress.

The following are the common themes which arose from the sessions:

#### **Making vs marketing**

A recurring theme was a perceived tension between the coachees' desire to focus on creative work and a sense that they needed to be simultaneously promoting themselves and their work - via networking, marketing, selling, giving presentations, applying for funding etc. Some were more comfortable and enthusiastic about such marketing activities than others.

#### **Communication skills**

Following on from the need for self-promotion, some coachees spent time developing their skills and confidence at promotional activities such as presentations, networking and marketing.

#### **Balancing different roles**

Many of the coachees are engaged in more than one job or professional role, dividing their time between a core creative/artistic role and other professional disciplines. This presented challenges of time management and identity, which were addressed in coaching sessions.

#### **Public vs private sectors**

Many coachees are active in both private and public cultural sectors. Some used the coaching to address the challenges of bridging the gaps between the different ethos, networks, critical standards, and organisational and business models that operate in the worlds of commercial enterprise and publicly funded work.

#### **Motivation**

Some coachees used coaching sessions to clarify the motivations driving their work - such as sifting out intrinsic motivations (e.g. creative satisfaction, social contribution) and extrinsic motivations (money, professional reputation) and achieving a harmonious balance between them. Another theme was finding the motivation and confidence to deal with challenging circumstances such as criticism, rejection and interpersonal conflict.

### **Interpersonal issues**

Communication, collaboration and conflict were features of many coaching conversations. Specific goals and actions included finding and working with collaborators, leadership roles and behaviours, and how to approach difficult conversations.

### **Time management**

Most coachees have a busy schedule and heavy workload, and some used the coaching to find better ways to manage their time and workflow.

### **The creative process**

Some coachees spent time focusing on their creative process, exploring new points of view and ways of working, in order to move their creative practice forward.

### **Mentoring**

Of the other elements of the Method programme, mentoring was the one that featured most prominently in coaching sessions. Many coachees used coaching sessions to prepare for meetings with their mentor and/or to digest the implications of discussions with their mentors.

#### **4.1.2 Reflection on coaching value within Method**

At the end of the session the coaches advised that it would be valuable for all parties if the coaches attended the initial group session for future programmes. The coaches could give a presentation to introduce themselves and the coaching process, explaining how it works and addressing issues such as confidentiality. This would give coachees a better sense of what to expect from their first coaching session, and an opportunity for more informed preparation for the coaching process. It would help to reduce any anxiety about coaching, as they would have had some contact with the coach and a clearer idea of what to expect from the sessions. It would also save time during the first coaching sessions, as basic briefing information would only have to be delivered once, rather than for each individual coachee. Finally, attending the initial group session would help the coaches to learn more about the other elements of the Method programme and situate their coaching work within the context of the overall programme.

At end of the final session the coaches asked coachees for feedback on the coaching, and for their views on how best to provide coaching for creative practitioners - the following is a digest of these conversations. All coachees said that they had found the coaching valuable, and most were enthusiastic about its benefits. Some said they had never previously considered coaching as an option for professional development, but were pleasantly surprised by the experience.

Most said that having a 'space to think' was one of the biggest benefits of coaching, and the fact that the coaches were there to facilitate their own thought processes, rather than offer advice. The coachees felt empowered by the opportunity to take responsibility for their own professional development.

Most said it was important to work with coaches who understood the creative process and cultural context of their work. A minority reflected that in the event, much of the coaching had focused on facilitating thought processes and decision making, so with hindsight it was not essential that the coach had a creative background.

Several coachees would have preferred more coaching sessions, or to have the sessions spread over a longer period. A few of them were frustrated that they were arriving at the second and third sessions having not had much opportunity to take action. They said they would have got greater benefit from extending the sessions into the autumn.

Several coachees said the summer was not the best time for the programme to run, as work was relatively quiet and there were limited opportunities to take action between sessions.

A minority of coachees said they would have liked more contact with their coach between sessions, via e-mail or telephone.

A minority said it was very important to them to have a choice of coach.

Several coachees felt the sessions could have been of greater value if they had been scheduled to more closely coincide with mentoring sessions; in some cases coachees did not meet their mentor until late in the coaching programme, which reduced the opportunity for synergy between the coaching and mentoring.

#### **4.1.3 Recommendations for Using Coaching with Creative Practitioners**

The observations and recommendations in this section are based on the coaches' experience of working with the Method cohort as well as previous clients from the creative sector, and contrasting this with the coaches experience of working with clients from corporate and public sectors.

##### **Facilitate self-directed learning**

One of the great strengths of coaching is the ability to facilitate self-directed learning, stimulating creative thinking and proactive action in coachees. This was clearly greatly valued by this cohort, containing a very high proportion of self-employed practitioners who clearly value their creative and professional autonomy. So it is particularly important for coaches to maintain a facilitative, non-directive stance when working with creative practitioners, for reasons of rapport as well as efficacy.

##### **Allow for maximum flexibility regarding goals and method**

Following on from the facilitative role of the coach, it is important to allow coachees maximum flexibility in their choice of goal and means of achieving it. In this respect it was helpful that the Method programme did not seek to impose a single concept of leadership, nor constrain coachees to working on 'leadership' goals. In the coaches judgement this contributed significantly to the quality of rapport, engagement, energy and efficacy throughout the coaching process.

##### **Use coaches who understand the creative and cultural industries**

Most coachees indicated that it was important to have a coach with understanding of the creative process and the creative and cultural industries, either as a creative practitioner themselves or with experience of working with creative professionals. A minority of coachees said that on reflection the coaching could have been done without this, and that the individual relationship between coach and coachee was the most important factor. Coaches with specialist experience of the creative and cultural industries are in a position to address a wider range of issues, and in greater depth, when working with creative practitioners.

##### **Schedule coaching and mentoring sessions for mutual reinforcement**

Given that many coachees used some of their coaching time to either prepare for a meeting with their mentor or digest the implications of mentoring conversations, it is optimal to schedule the first mentoring session between the first and second coaching sessions. This would give coachees the opportunity to devote part of the first session to preparing for the first meeting with their mentor.

## **4.2 Mentoring**

Mentoring was the most prominent of the other elements of the Method programme and was rated highly by many participants. As well as the benefits of mentoring meetings in different creative contexts, a number of real outcomes and achievements resulted from the matchings made. These included a number of new collaborations between the cohortees themselves, several commissions and exhibitions for new work resulted from the mentor relationship and in other examples mentees were invited into various academic contexts. Method intends to track these and other development from the programme in six months to analyse the longer term benefits of mentoring, coaching and action learning.

The mentors made important contributions, complementing and adding to other Method 'multipliers' such as agents, cultural thinkers, practitioners, speakers and academics.

### **4.2.1 Approach**

Overall, it was felt by the mentors that the structure worked well. Where they made comments about the process within Method, they felt well-informed about the practical aspects. However, some observed that more guidance on the expectations from mentor and mentee, particularly where both are new to the experience, would have been useful. This guidance would be important in offering more information about planning for the sessions.

### **4.2.2 Value**

Mentors:

Many mentors reported that they really enjoyed their sessions, and were pleased to contribute to Method. In a good number of the statements returned to Method it was notable that Mentors had a rewarding experience also.

Mentors felt that they were helping to provide a safe environment in which to test weaknesses and improve mentees' approaches to real world situations such as commercial galleries or agents. It was noted by one mentor that, "this is a rare opportunity made possible by the Method programme".

One mentor observed that, the mentoring was, "a very interesting experience, it helped me to recognise and identify my own key strengths and weaknesses. It was great to see my contacts being put to good use, whilst also introducing them to new work".

The mentors seemed to agree that the programme benefited artists in their early 'mid-career' who needed a bit of 're-booting', metaphorically speaking.

Mentees:

The survey feedback from participants revealed that the mentoring was felt to be a big thing, enabling mentees to claim valuable time back for themselves; it also helped in getting high quality input "for an hour or two" from an experienced cultural leader. In the words of one participant, the experience led them to, "a revived state - it gave me time to think and write". Another explained that the Mentoring, "had a huge focussing value"

By way of contrast a mentor observed that it was necessary to give, "a much tougher picture of the world than the mentee was carrying"

Overall the mentees felt the opportunity offered a highly valued chance to be able to go and speak with somebody in a leadership role in complete confidence, with honesty clearly understood between them. One mentee commented that it's like going to the doctors!

### **4.2.3 Outcomes**

In some cases it was noted that the artists have much to offer as a mentee to a mentor, who was many cases was not an artist. The rapport between them led to a range of fascinating discussions including the nature of creativity, improvisation, interdependent relationships in practice, working on the edge, and the desire to bring into being what has not taken form yet.

A particular comment that was echoed by only a few others was the potential for over stimulus and support given through Method. It was felt that there was a risk of over-provision of different kinds of support.

Key common outcomes included:

- Looking beyond the local and regional towards national and international audiences
- Applying for fellowships, conferences
- Accessing critical review and responses from art critics, students and the public
- Looking into writing up prospective articles in the specialist and national press,
- Opportunities for practice based research opportunities
- Identifying gaps in the market for mentoring artists as leaders, despite problems of public funding
- Mentors have seen the value of this and would like to do more

#### **4.2.4 Recommendations**

- Need for clarity as to when mentoring starts and stops - ensuring mentoring avoids slipping into therapy
- Mentor programme should last longer for optimum benefit i.e. 6month - 1 year.
- Track development of mentees in six months to analyse the longer term benefits of mentoring, coaching and action learning
- Any future scheme could look to build the network of mentors
- There should be more time to prepare the mentors and artists for the first session.

### 4.3. Action Learning

At the Opening Event on Tuesday 19 May 2009, Action Learning was introduced as a leadership tool and reflective device to the participants by Sian Prime and Hilary Jennings, both qualified action learning set facilitators. The primary aim of the sessions was for the cohort to travel forward in their understanding of artist/practitioner leadership potential with facilitated sessions to enable them to place themselves more clearly in the context of their own leadership journey and to enable the cohort to understand the potential of action learning and the possibility that they might continue to meet after the end event or indeed during the pilot (to add to the legacy of the pilot). Action Learning was presented as an opportunity to balance individual work paths with a broader dialogue context and as an opportunity for investigation, interpretation and exploration and a safe environment to share ideas around artist leadership.

Hilary Jennings: *"there was some tension between people's vision of what represented a good artist and a good leader. Should artists lead or do they need to be separate and challenging? Does 'leading' require them to engage too far with a mainstream?"*

As a result of the interest in Action Learning raised on the opening event and in the interests of fulfilling the values of Method as a programme entirely responsive to the needs of its participants, Action Learning was then offered to all participants for a further two action learning sets with additional contracts offered to Hilary Jennings and Sian Prime. The Budget was reconsidered to make space for these additions to the programme and to allow for travel costs where appropriate and the participants were then invited to a range of dates at differing venues. The take up was high particularly given the nature of the already tightly packed Method programme experienced as it was in a few short months.

The following are edited highlights and quotes from Sian and Hilary's reports to the Method team when briefed to consider the following aspects:

- the use of Action Learning specifically with artists and creative practitioners;
- the use of Action Learning as a tool in this kind of leadership development programme;
- any reflections on the levels of engagement or journey travelled by participants;
- any thoughts on the legacy of the Method pilot;
- the likeliness of the cohort to continue with action learning in any way, either in their existing groups, or rolling it out to other contexts.

#### **Action Learning within Method:**

Hilary Jennings : *"I think as a tool it adds an invaluable element of concentrated group discovery alongside the individual mentoring/coaching input and the more open networking events. There is a particular impact where the group are peers as the learning journey of the presenter is often mirrored by the set members so deepening the learning."*

Sian Prime *"Method was very responsive to the participants on the programme's desire to work more with Action Learning. The initial day had introduced Action Learning to participants as a tool and we used it to discuss Leadership; the interest in the process and the opportunity it provided for participants to meet and work together was such that Method incorporated it in to the whole programme. I feel that the Method Team should be applauded for being so reflexive."*

#### **The Use of Action Learning with Artists and Creative Practitioners:**

Sian Prime " Action Learning is a very powerful tool and the individual practitioners that I have worked with in the past have told me that it has made a strongly positive impact on their working practice. Most artists work in isolation, this is often through choice, and while collaborations are common, having a space to talk honestly, openly and confidentially about work is rare. Action Learning provides creative practitioners with an opportunity to not only talk about the challenges they are facing in any aspect of their work or life, but provides them with people who will support them to find new and appropriate solutions. Working with artists and other creatives in Action Learning creates very strong Sets, it seems to me that not only are they likely to be strongly emotionally literate but it is possible that their strongly honed creative skills will generate a strong set of questions and new solutions. "

## **Use of Action Learning in Method's Leadership Development Programme**

Including the opportunity for participants in Method to meet in groups gave participants' peer to peer reflection and mentoring opportunities, they were able to, outside of the Set time, reflect on the similarities and differences in the process and support each other as they developed as a consequence of the input from Method.

Sian Prime: "Leadership is often regarded as lonely, and as leaders of an artform, the opportunities to break this feeling of seclusion are important. I felt, too, that providing a space outside of the Coaches and the organisers of the Programme gave participants a chance to honestly reflect on the journey they were undertaking, the levels of confidence, ambition and curiosity that they had."

## **Legacy**

Hilary Jennings: "I am sure that the participants have gained clarity on their artistic process, their strengths, ambition and how to communicate that to others. In terms of legacy it is difficult to tell from the work I did with them, but it feels as though a more confident group or artists are finishing the process, and I have to imagine that this will ensure that stronger work will be made. In addition it appeared as though strong connections were developed in the Method process which are likely to support creative work in the future, either through collaborations, advice or other informal backing."

## **Continuation of Action Learning**

Sian Prime: "The Set I worked with were eager to continue meeting, and I offered to facilitate another 2 sessions for them without payment. I suspect that they will continue to meet. In addition I think that some of the participants found the process very engaging and are likely to use it with other groups to continue to develop their practice."

Hilary Jennings: "Continuing sets is tricky - the hardest thing (from personal experience in a facilitated set which is now self facilitating) is the administration of people's diaries to get dates agreed! Two sets is also a fairly short time to grasp the process enough to take this on - not sure what the tipping point would be - probably at least 4 sets with a fixed group (ours varied a bit) to build group dynamics. There was interest in the process and several of the group undertook facilitation of some sort as part of their jobs so I suspect that they may wish to investigate further or use and adapt some of the techniques. If they were offered further funded sets over a longer period I think a significant number would take them up."

## Appendix 1: Participants and Contributors

### Core delivery team:

Tim Eastop  
Tim Jones  
Karen Turner  
Mary Helen Young (administrator)

### Artist/practitioners, and their nominators:

Participant	Nominator
Tine Bech	Simon Olding, University of the Creative Arts
Helena Ben-Zenou	Pauline de Souza, Director, Diversity Art Forum and Senior Lecturer, School of Architecture & Visual Arts, East London
Sara Bowler	James Green, Director, Newlyn Art Gallery & The Exchange
Helen Carnac	[CLP Artist Placement, not open application] – see appendix 2
David Cotterrell	Susan Jones, Director of Programmes, A-N The Artist Information Company
Jon Fawcett	Paul Hobson, Director Contemporary Art Society
Rebecca Fortnum	Orianna Baddeley, University of the Arts London
Julie Freeman	Hannah Redler, Director of Arts, Dana Centre, Science Museum
Alasdair Hopwood	Jennifer Thatcher, Director of Talks, ICA
Sam Howey Nunn	Nick Sweeting, Producer, Improbable
Jolanta Jagiello	Alice Lenkiewicz, Catalyst Creative Media, Liverpool
Leo Kay	John McGrath, Artistic Director National Theatre of Wales
Manu Luksch	Bill McAlister, Consultant, RoundHouse, Former Director BAC & ICA
Annette Mees	Andrew McKinnon, Programme Leader, MA Creative Producing for Theatre and Live Performance, Birkbeck Institute
Farngis Shahrokhi (Zory)	Stella Barnes, Head of Education, Oval House Theatre
Louise Short	Tessa Fitzjohn, Visual Arts Officer, ACE SW
Tassos Stevens	Alex Fleetwood, Director, Hide & Seek Festival
Erika Tan	Steven Bode, Director, Film and Video Umbrella
Anthea Williams	Josie Rourke, Artistic Director, Bush Theatre
Deon Winter	Tom Hackett, University of Derby
Alan Yates	Svein Moxvold, Svein Moxvold Studio

### Coaches

Wishful Thinking Limited - Mark McGuinness and Rachel Gilmore

### Action Learning Set Facilitators

Hilary Jennings  
Sian Prime

### Mentors

Sarah Allen, Arts Marketing Consultant  
Rachel Anderson, Head of Interaction, Artangel  
Mark Ball, LIFT Artistic Director and Former Director of Fierce Earth  
Paul Bonaventura, Senior Research Fellow in Fine Art Studies at the Ruskin School of Drawing & Fine Art and Tutor for Fine Art at Magdalen College Oxford  
Gus Casely-Hayford, Cultural Strategist, Former Director of Arts for Arts Council England and Former Director INIVA  
Katherine Clarke  
Manick Govinda, Artist Development Advisor, Artsadmin  
David Harradine, Artistic Director, Fevered Sleep  
Rhian Harris, Director V&A Museum of Childhood  
Gill Hedley, Independent Curator and Consultant, formerly Director of Contemporary Arts Society  
Vanessa Jackson, Artist and Teacher Royal Academy School  
Janis Jeffries, Critic, Maker and Tutor, Goldsmiths University  
Robin Klassnik, Director, Matt's Gallery  
Rob La Frenais, Curator, Arts Catalyst  
Jenni Lomax, Director, Camden Arts Centre

Kerry Michael, Artistic Director Theatre Royal Stratford East

Daro Montag, artist and leader of RANE (Research Art, Nature, Environment) research group, University College Falmouth

Heather Morrison, Artist

Adam Sutherland, Director, Grizedale Arts

Kate Tyndall, Producer and Writer

Jane Watt, Artist Curator

Mark Waugh, Director A Foundation, Writer

Max Wigram, Director, Max Wigram Gallery - Dealer

Suzy Wilson, Artistic Director, Clod Ensemble

### **Artist Advisory Panel**

Chris Wainwright, artist, curator, Head of Camberwell, Chelsea and Wimbledon, University of the Arts London; President of ELIA (the European League of Institutes for the Arts).

Grace Adam, Artist

David Buckland Artist and Director, Cape Farewell

Mark Waugh, Director A Foundation, Writer

### **Cohort Selection Advisors**

Graham Devlin, Consultant, Graham Devlin Associates

Michaela Crimmin, Head of Arts, RSA

### **Partnering Organisations**

Create KX

Parlour Culture

LCACE, London Centre for Arts and Cultural Exchange

The Jerwood Space/Jerwood Charitable Foundation

Hermitage Community Moorings

Chelsea College of Art and Design

The A Foundation

Live Art Development Agency

Goldsmiths College

Craftspace (host of participant, Helen Carnac: Artist Placement)

### **Event and Discussion Panellists**

Marc Boothe, Director B3 Media

David Cross, artist, Cornford & Cross

Paul Glinkowski, Researcher, the Engine Room, Wimbledon School of Art

Paul Heritage, Artistic Director, People's Palace Projects

Chris Howorth, Business School, Royal Holloway College

Peter Jenkinson, Cultural Broker

John Kieffer, independent consultant and cultural policy advisor

Keith Khan, artist, former Head of Culture for LOCOG

Richard Layzell, artist

Clare Reddington, Director iShed/Pervasive Media Studio Bristol

David Sims, Head of Faculty of Management, Cass Business School

Sarah Thelwall, MD MyCake

Chris Wainwright, artist, curator, Head of Camberwell, Chelsea and Wimbledon, University of the Arts London; President of ELIA (the European League of Institutes for the Arts).

## **Appendix 2: Recruitment and Promotion**

Opportunities for artists/practitioners to join Method's first cohort were promoted through a wide range of networks, free postings, free to use mailing lists and key websites. Over 60 important promotion points were sent details of Method alongside the extensive contacts of the Method Team.

### **Key promotion points were:**

- the CLP website (key host);
- Links to the CLP recruitment page on MLA, ACE and CCS websites.
- Key cultural sector sites including: Arts Professional; Musicians Union; PRS; The Artists Information Company; Artquest; VAGA; Crafts Council; New Work Network; etc.
- Networks of the Method team and the Solar Associates website, e-newsletter;
- Postings on free-to-use mailing lists including the CLP e-bulletin, ACE ArtsNews/ArtsJobs, ArtsAdmin e-digest, CreativePeople, Arts Industry, the LCACE e-newsletter, and artform-specific mailing lists.

### **How artists applied**

Artists and practitioners attracted by the offer submitted an application by email with attachments:

- Details of their artistic practice, in the form of no more than 2 weblinks. Up to 4 separate supporting material attachments (e.g. images, video or audio files).
- A CV (max 2 sides), including details of two referees;
- A supporting statement from someone in a leading role in the arts (max 300 words). This provided the Method Team with an alternative perspective of the artists potential for leadership development
- 500 (max.) word statement describing their understanding of how artists/practitioners lead through their practice, their own leadership strengths and needs, and why this opportunity might benefit their aspirations

### **Selection: process and criteria**

The Method team used a fair scoring system against the selection criteria to determine the final cohort. The final cohort was reviewed with two external advisors, the consultant Graham Devlin and Head of Arts at the RSA Michaela Crimmin. CLP were sent the final cohort prior to offer.

No interviews were possible in the tight programme schedule and the final decisions were made on written application and review of accompanying material against the selected criteria using a scoring system.

### **Eligibility:**

Method was open to individual artists/practitioners at any career stage (emerging to established) who were primarily engaged with professionally producing, presenting and/or distributing new creative art work – and who sat within the eligibility criteria of the Cultural Leadership Programme – see <http://www.culturalleadership.org.uk/fullpage/default.aspx>.

The programme required that the successful applicants could confirm they attendance of Method's opening and closing event, as well as commit to the minimum required participation

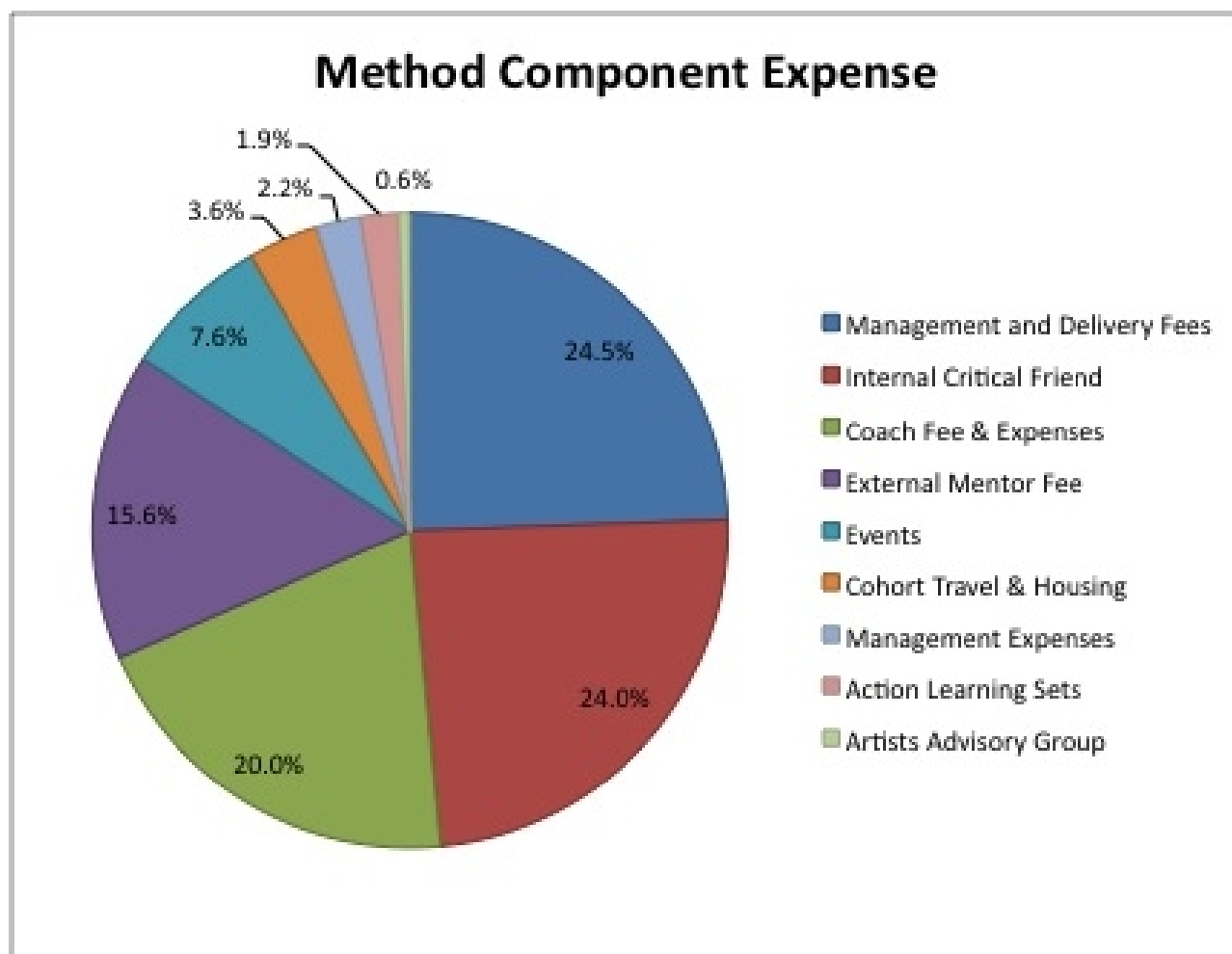
### **Selection criteria:**

- Desire to explore and understand potential for leadership development as an artist/practitioner;
- Track record and practice profile - to inform the diversity of practice within the cohort and where each artist is placed in their leadership trajectory;
- Demonstrable commitment to collaborative learning and development.

### **Cultural Leadership Programme Artist Placements**

In discussion with CLP it was decided to extend the Method offer on a pro rata costed basis to the first three artist leadership placements of 2009. Helen Carnac of Craftspace had indicated her desire to enter an application and to be sure that a place was not allocated from the 20 available (thereby doubling the support to one artist) a pro rata cost of the budget proportionate to direct spend on each artist per head was covered by Helen Carnac from her individual leadership development budget. Helen's choice to join Method was to be able to travel her journey in conjunction and alongside others.

### Appendix 3: Financial breakdown



### Budget Breakdown

£

#### Income

Cultural Leadership Programme – artist/practitioner leadership development	50,000
Cultural Leadership Programme – Artist Placement (via Craftspace)	2,500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>52,500</b>

#### Expenditure

Management and Delivery fees	12,840
Critical Friend – fees	12,600
Coach fees and expenses	10,500
Mentor fees	8,200
Events	3,995
Cohort travel and accommodation	1,809
Management expenses	1,299
Action Learning sets	1,000
Artist Advisory Group	257
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>52,500</b>

#### **Appendix 4: Evaluation methodology and credits**

Method's evaluation methodology has consisted of:

- for coaches, mentors and action learning set facilitators – the provision of overview reports about their assessment of the impact that the tools and approaches they have offered;
- the distribution of 'soft outcome' charts to all cohort members, encouraging them to identify up to 8 aspects of their development that they wished to track during the course of the programme. Participants were encouraged to visualise and reflect upon their progress at the beginning, middle and end of Method, and to use this process as stimulus for a 500 word approx statement.
- Accumulation of key insights from participants, Artist Advisory Group members, guest speakers and presenters, and others identified in the appendix.
- Circulation of a brief survey to the cohort asking for broad qualitative responses to the programme's key delivery elements and administration.

The Method team want to recognise and thank the cohort of 21 artist/practitioners for their very fulsome and detailed contributions to the evaluation process. Also, to the coaches at Wishful Thinking (Mark McGuinness and Rachel Gilmore), the action learning set facilitators, Hilary Jennings and Sian Prime; and the mentors for their contributions, which we hope will ensure that future provision is even better placed to support artist/practitioner needs.

Special thanks are due to Mary Helen Young – who began as an intern and went on to become a paid member of the team - for the administrative support of the programme.

Thanks to the Cultural Leadership Programme for their belief in and support for Method.

## **Appendix 5: Further thoughts on artist/practitioner leadership – from the cohort and its guests**

In terms of leadership I am increasingly aware of the power of personality, and the dangers of ego. Attributing successful leadership abilities to a subjective, and often intangible element of who we are is problematic, and probably why there are so many attempts at the definition. I have a problem with the word 'leader' 'ship' which by its construction indicates that peoples are bundled together (on a ship) waiting to be taken in the same direction. Is this true? We live in an era of multiplicity and concurrency where a single view may not be so relevant any more. Leaders needs to be opportunity brokers, inspirers, landscape exposers, through provokers, not an unreachable figure on a podium trying to sway the masses. I am not sure that the leadership questioning throughout Method is helpful – it was quite a distraction initially, and could be bought in at a later point. I wrote this in my initial statement: “artists and practitioners have a impact, and impact leads to change”. Whether this is termed 'leading' or not is unimportant – change, however, is.

**Julie Freeman**

In relation to....leadership, I have come to the conclusion that the fundamentals....are in the depth of the vision and execution of practice. I am not interested in ....power, [or] the esteem or status that a leadership role in the arts sector provides. I am not interested in climbing a cultural ladder. I am interested in making works of art that move, inspire and transform people. If within that process I acquire some of the qualities that leaders possess, if people are inspired to journey in a similar direction or to make their own direction from what they see me doing then, that for me is leadership. The idea that a great leader is almost invisible, allowing those who are being guided, to believe that they have single-handedly created the path they are walking and the result that they are manifesting; this sits well with my experiences within the role of artist facilitator/director. The method process has helped me to recognise and celebrate the qualities of leadership that I possess and the difference between aspiring towards a leadership role and leading through example.

**Leo Kay**

I still think leadership is about empowering others and not about empowering yourself; becoming an idol or figurehead. A creative leader is one who does not block the ways for others for the sake of power and leadership, a creative leader empowers others, shares their critical thoughts and the processes of their creative skills with any individual to make the possibility of the realization of their own creativity, abilities and powers.

**Sara Bowler**

"I think those provocative discussions you've held - with Paul, the one with Marc Boothe etc - must have been very empowering to people on the programme too. A very good idea, and I think there's so much room for this kind of open, deep, revelations and insights from these very special people. " **Kate Tyndall**

'I think the biggest surprise was that I was in demand, I was being targeted by other companies and I found that no one else was thinking like I was thinking and I was more skilled than I realised. I was stretched, I was learning, and I still thought that I was an artist within this. I was strategic, I was a leader in some way, in my way....my conclusion is that we are multi-skilled, and it's often a question of testing the water and of self-belief.' - **Richard Layzell @ British Library, 1.9.09**

'I think I agree 'artist, not entrepreneur' is the same thing for me. I heard Tom Morris from National Theatre say the other day that for him an artist was someone who could see round a corner and then communicate what they see to someone else. And for me that's what an entrepreneur is.It's someone that can see what's coming it's someone who can spot and opportunity, someone who can ask a question. It's crucially someone that can put that in to action and deliver something based on those thoughts.'- **Clare Reddington @ British Library, 1.9.09**

'Broaden your network. You're incredibly valuable as people who know how to see around corners. There are a million sector-specific network clusters of design agencies, or digital agencies, or new media agencies... who want your thought leadership. Maybe not what it is that you do every day but your ability to provoke, to ask questions and to think differently.' - **Clare Reddington @ British Library, 1.9.09**

'The one thing that people aren't wildly creative about is the business model that they operate? Why is that and what can we do about it? ...I know that within funding structures there is absolutely a language and you need to be able to demonstrate how you fit within certain boxes... but just because you fit within those boxes to achieve one set of funds doesn't mean you have to actually live within them. So how do we start breaking free from that?' - **Sarah Thelwall @ British Library, 1.9.09**

'I would argue that the job of the leader is to be the poet in residence of an organisation. So what a leader does is use carefully chosen and arranged words that enable people to think in a way that they weren't thinking before.' - **David Sims @ Hermitage Moorings, 14.9.09**

'Leadership is never done by one person.' - **David Sims @ Hermitage Moorings, 14.9.09**

'You need someone to champion what you do. For people working with organisations as outsiders - is there a champion who interprets you to the organisation?' - **David Sims, Hermitage Moorings, 14.9.09**

'I wonder if in that hierarchical structure where the artist is seen by all different people in the hierarchy as outside of it - that the leadership see the artist as a conduit to accessing people lower down the rungs? Because there is this familiarity and a way that the arts are seen to be speaking to people on all different levels. So I found it really easy to get the top level on board. It was almost like they had to because I was on the ground level with everyone else. So all of a sudden I was this person who was traversing the hierarchy, and they all wanted to make sure that they were with me, in a way.' - **Julie Freeman @ Hermitage Moorings, 14.9.09**

'Most artists do things other than art for money. There aren't that many artists that actually make a living from their art. I think there's a sense that not only are not all artists the same, but all artists have different moments when they might put their artist hat on, or might put their administrator hat on or whatever else... The interesting thing is in what capacity might you then contribute to art policy and decision making at the higher level. Do you make it in your capacity as the arts administrator or director of your artist group, or do you make it as an artist? And if you make it as an artist, would you be making a different decision than you would with a different hat on?' - **Rebecca Fortnum @ Hermitage Moorings, 14.9.09**

'I think we all wear loads of hats at the same time, I don't think you can segregate your own self in to these different bowls. I don't think it helps to talk about artists as all being different - we've all got multiple hats on, multiple types and sizes, but they're never separated like that.' - **Julie Freeman @ Hermitage Moorings, 14.9.09**