

A summary of findings of the evaluation of the Clore Leadership Programme's Fellowship Programme for leaders in the cultural sector.

Introduction

In the light of the extraordinary success of the first three years of the Clore Fellowship Programme, the Strategy Board decided in 2007 to commission a developmental evaluation of the Programme, so that we might better understand both what it is that participants and employers so value about it and where there might be scope for making it even more effective. To this end, Lee Corner and Phyllida Shaw were commissioned to undertake an evaluation, and what follows is a summary of their methodology and their findings. We would like to express our immense gratitude to them and to everyone who agreed to be interviewed or otherwise to contribute to the process. We trust that in section 5 of the summary you will see that we really have taken note of your observations and have already begun to respond to them, so that the Clore Leadership Programme may enhance ever further the uniquely valuable contribution it has begun to make to the UK's cultural sector. %dNichola Johnson, Chair, Clore Leadership Programme

1. Background

The Clore Leadership Programme is a charitable company, established in 2004. The new organisation was the recommendation of a Task Force, commissioned in 2002 by the Clore Duffield Foundation to find solutions to the perceived shortage of appropriately skilled and experienced leaders in Britain's cultural sector.

Today, the Clore Leadership Programme runs three programmes: the flagship Fellowship Programme, now in its fourth year, and the smaller-scale and more recently developed Short Course and Governance programmes. In spring 2007 the Strategy Board of the Clore Leadership Programme commissioned Lee Corner and Phyllida Shaw to carry out an evaluation of the Fellowship Programme. This is a summary of their findings.

2. The scope of the evaluation; its management and methods

The evaluation looked at three areas: the impact of the Programme on the Fellows; its impact on the cultural sector; and the effectiveness of the administrative operation. The evaluation process was overseen by a steering group chaired by Nichola Johnson (Chair of the Clore Leadership Programme) and comprising Pauline Tambling and John Holden (members of the Strategy

Board), Lord Smith of Finsbury (Trustee and Director of the Clore Leadership Programme), Sue Hoyle (Trustee and Deputy Director) and Sally Bacon (Director of the Clore Duffield Foundation).

The evaluation team:

- reviewed both published and internal documentation on the Programme and other leadership development opportunities
- conducted 90 interviews with past and current Fellows, secondment hosts, research supervisors, mentors, funders and observers in the cultural and academic sectors
- observed the induction process for new Fellows, together with elements of the residential courses at the end of one year and the beginning of another

3. Findings

3.1. The distinctiveness of the Fellowship Programme

The Fellowship Programme is one of a growing number of leadership development opportunities available to people working in the cultural sector in the UK. Some of the features that make it distinctive are attributable to the extent to which it is rooted in the sector:

- It has been built on a thorough, high-profile and sector-engaging research and consultation programme, undertaken by people with credibility in both the academic and the cultural sectors.
- It has been financially supported by a visionary Foundation with an understanding of, and commitment to, the cultural sector.
- It has attracted and appointed a high-profile, highly qualified and experienced Directorate.
- It has embraced the financial and organisational challenges of designing a multi-faceted programme that can be tailored to individual needs.
- It has harnessed the enthusiasm and support of the boards and senior executives of major cultural institutions.
- It has captured the imagination of the sector, resulting in a large number of high-quality applications from both conventional and less conventional parts of the cultural sector, and attracting the attention of the press.

3.2. Fellows' motivations and objectives

Fellows' motivations for applying to the Programme include: finding a more senior, more challenging job; having paid time out to review a current or recent position and / or to think about possible next steps; and having time to understand more about the theory and practice of leadership, with a view to applying it to a current or future role.

Individuals' objectives for their Fellowship include: strengthening their networks; raising their personal profile; learning about organisations outside their experience or sub-sector; learning more about different aspects of leadership; spending time and money on different kinds of training; and reading, writing and reflecting more.

3.3. The impact of the Programme on the Fellows

The application process is demanding, and encourages applicants to consider very seriously what they want from the Programme and why. The impact starts here. For the successful applicants, the Fellowship is experienced as a combination of factors: the fact of being selected; taking part in the Programme; and recognition of oneself, as well as by others, as part of a professional family. Fellows (i.e. successful applicants) are aware that a considerable amount of money is being invested in them. While they readily acknowledge that the value of the Programme far exceeds the money spent, the fact of having £55,000 spent on their development has a profound impact on their feeling of self-worth.

A significant number of Fellows have secured new jobs in different organisations and at a more senior level. While it is not possible to say whether they would have achieved this without the Fellowship Programme, the evidence suggests that the experience brings out qualities that are valued by prospective employers. Some of those who have secured new posts say that the main difference the Programme made was in giving them the confidence to apply.

The enhancement of Fellows' personal and professional networks is a major outcome of the Programme. These networks provide them with access to information, intelligence and advice and give them more opportunities to influence policy and practice in the cultural sector.

The impact of the Programme on the Fellows can be summarised as follows. Many of the Fellows interviewed for the evaluation said that the Programme:

- is hugely confidence-building, both personally and professionally

- is eye-opening . in terms of exposure to other parts of the cultural sector, other jobs, other perspectives
- develops and deepens their appreciation and understanding
- creates a support network (far beyond what most of them had expected), not only of Fellows but also of the Programme team, mentors, secondment hosts, coaches, etc.
- provides an opportunity for self-reflection, awareness and learning
- challenges habitual or default ways of doing things
- reinvigorates and re-energises them professionally
- creates bonds of friendship (and a belief that they will last)
- makes them better leaders

For some Fellows, the intense programme of personal and professional development presents particular challenges. It can:

- disturb the equilibrium: trigger questions of personal ability, aspiration and world-view; disrupt relationships; and catalyse traumatic change
- highlight the challenge of being a woman / a carer / from a minority community / from outside London / a freelancer

3.4. The impact of the Programme on the cultural sector

Most interviewees felt that it was too soon to comment, with confidence, on the Programme's impact on the cultural sector . or that their sub-sector, or part of the UK, had had too little experience of the Programme to judge. The evaluation nevertheless identified three significant areas of impact on the cultural sector, as follows:

(i) It is causing a ripple in the jobs market as Fellows leave their existing post, or put their business on hold, in order to focus on the Programme or to take up a post elsewhere. Changing jobs as a result of a course or development programme is not unique to the Clore Fellowship Programme, but there is some concern amongst employers who, while recognising that the Programme aims to serve the needs of the sector, fear the loss of an individual who makes an important contribution to their organisation.

(ii) It is triggering more debate about approaches to leadership development in the cultural sector. The Programme does not prescribe a single model of leadership, and because the Fellows come from such a wide range of organisations in terms of scale, artform and sub-sector, they are interested in exploring styles of leadership that reflect their experience, values and organisational cultures.

(iii) It is creating more competition between providers in this field. Individuals seeking to develop their leadership skills, or to address the issue of leadership in their organisation, have many more options now than were available three years ago, when the Clore Leadership Programme started. There is therefore more pressure on the providers of leadership development programmes and courses to be clear about what they are offering, so that applicants and employers can distinguish between them.

3.5. The administrative operation of the Programme

The evaluation found that the Programme was run highly efficiently, but as the number of Fellows and funders grows, more resources will be needed to ensure that the Programme can maintain the standards it has set itself.

4. Challenges and recommendations

The evaluation identified six challenges for the Programme, and made a series of recommendations in response to these.

4.1 The challenges are as follows:

- creating and meeting expectations
- developing and maintaining relationships
- strengthening the Programme content
- supporting Fellows research activity
- sharing the learning
- increasing the capacity of the Programme team to deliver

4.2 The recommendations are that:

- The Board and Strategy Board of the Clore Leadership Programme define and articulate, more precisely, the objectives of the Programme, and agree an unambiguous set of criteria against which to measure their success.
- The Strategy Board reviews the application and selection processes to ensure that they serve the Programme's objectives.
- The Programme appoints a part-time member of staff to support the Director and Deputy Director in their one-to-one contact with Fellows. In particular, such an appointment would make a significant difference to the Deputy Director's capacity to nurture relationships with partners of the Programme.
- The Programme team produces a clear written statement of what funders of the specialist Fellowships can expect from their relationship with the Programme, and with the Fellows they support.
- The Programme team continues to invite and listen closely to feedback from Fellows and from regular contributors, to ensure that the Programme design and content are supporting the achievement of the Programme's objectives.
- For the second residential programme, in July each year, the number of speakers is reduced and the number of facilitators of tasks and discussion increased.
- The style and content of the annual Conference programme be the subject of consultation with past Fellows, and feature the experience of Fellows to a greater degree than it does at present.
- The Strategy Board reviews and agrees objectives for the research element of the Programme.
- The Programme pursues its provisional plan to appoint a part-time member of staff, or freelancer, to manage the research element of the Programme.
- The Programme establishes a sub-committee, or forum (including a sample of research supervisors, secondment hosts and others), to support the new appointment and to try to ensure that, where appropriate, the research undertaken by Fellows benefits the sector.

- The Programme team spends more time trying to ensure that the Leadership Programme as a whole is sharing its experience with the sector, through conferences, articles, talks, Board membership and other routes.
- The Programme states, more clearly, its expectation that Fellows, too, have a responsibility for identifying . and taking . opportunities to share their experiences.

5. Actions planned in response to the evaluation

The Strategy Board has welcomed the findings and recommendations of the evaluation team, and has already taken a number of steps to strengthen still further the work of the Fellowship Programme.

Initiatives affecting the recruitment of 2008/9 Fellows include the following:

- The headline statement of mission for the Programme has changed, and the brochure has been redesigned to cover more broadly the spread of the Programme's work.
- The application form has been improved and now requires a nominator's comments. In addition, the assessment process itself has been strengthened in a number of ways.
- As recommended by the evaluation team, a new part-time member of staff has been appointed to assist with the provision of individual advice and support to Fellows.
- The timetable for the second Bore Place residential course has been streamlined and amended in the light of experience, and of discussion with former Fellows. Extended facilitation will now be available throughout the fortnight, with former Fellows taking an active part in helping to lead sessions with the current cohort.
- Discussions are underway to consider how best to take forward the evaluation's recommendations on the research component of the Programme.

Beyond these initiatives, the Programme's staff and Strategy Board continue to take a proactive role in sharing the Programme's experiences with other parts of the sector. Work has already started on the following:

- Fellows have been actively involved in shaping the format of the annual Conference, to take place in June.

- Governance arrangements for the Clore Leadership Programme as a whole are being closely examined, in order to identify how improvements can be made . including the involvement of former Fellows.
- The Programme's website www.cloreleadership.org is being redesigned and updated.
- Consideration is being given to the inclusion of new strands of leadership development work, to sit alongside the existing Fellowship, Short Course and Governance Programmes (see 1. above).