Clore Leadership-AHRC Online Research Library Paper

JUGAAD - Hacking best social practice in an Indian context as a means to consider UK approaches

Author: Kim Wide

Supervisor/s: Dr Anthony Schrag, Queen Mary University of London

Year paper completed: 2024

Leadership Content Theme/s: Inclusive Leadership Practice, Sector Insights

AHRC Subject Area/s: Community Art, Cultural Geography

A note on contents:

Since 2005 Clore Leadership and AHRC have partnered to offer a diverse range of cultural leaders the opportunity to produce a piece of extended research relating to leadership and to their specific cultural discipline. These papers, published from 2023 onward on the Clore Leadership-AHRC online research library, reflect an important contribution to the field and we are extremely pleased to make them available to practitioners, scholars, and other interested parties. We recognise that this research library contains a range of terminologies and outlooks: these are reflective of the significant and ongoing changes within the cultural sector over the past 20 years. As such we urge readers to recognise that the authors' thinking and language may have shifted since completion of these papers, or may be in the process of shifting as consequence of their enquiries.

Unless otherwise stated, research papers included in the Clore Leadership-AHRC Online Research Library have not been formally peer reviewed or published in an academic journal.

JUGAAD - Hacking best social practice in an Indian context as a means to consider UK approaches

Kim Wide MBE
January 2024

Introduction:

Last year, I was fortunate to be selected as a Fellow for the Clore Leadership programme: This fellowship programme has been designed to strengthen leadership across the cultural sector, and I had been selected for my ambition to support the further development of Socially Engaged Art practice. The opportunity came at a time of sectoral self-reflection when Socially Engaged Art organisations and practitioners were considering our ability to be relevant, responsive, ethical and collaborative. For me, too, and the work of my organisation (Take A Part, UK) - at a time when output was prolific but was also hurried, urgent and somehow felt critical - it allowed me much needed space to pause, think and open up new dialogues about a post-pandemic art world.

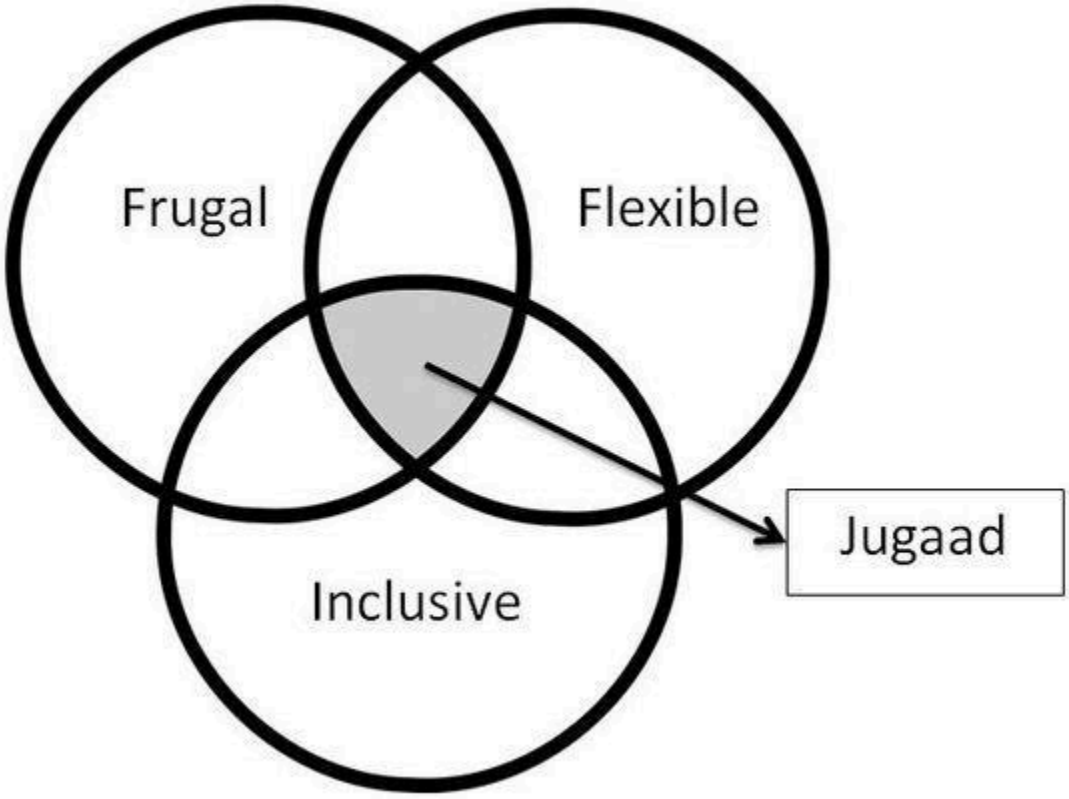
While on Clore Fellowship, I met Socially Engaged Art practitioner and Chevening Fellow Anurupa Roy (Katkatha Puppet Theatre, Delhi), who, in her own sphere of work in the Indian context, was at another coal face of Socially Engaged Art.

Through our talks about our practices and situations, we felt there was a lot to explore in terms of the similarities and fundamentals of Socially Engaged Art practice in a UK and Indian context as well as their differences. There was an awareness that the contexts of our practice are fundamentally different with a Global North framework of understanding for me and a South Asian context for her. There was a curiosity to understand how Socially Engaged Art practice is implemented in India as opposed to the UK, and questions emerged: Are the fundamentals of practice the same? What does the context do to the art form? And what can we in our UK context take from a Socially Engaged Art practice formed in a country where systems of health care, politics, race and religious rights, gender etc take on a different form and weight than in the UK? Crucially: *What can we learn from one another and about ourselves in our different frameworks?* These questions seemed pertinent to both countries and specifically offered a chance for reflection for cultural leaders in the UK

As such, I spent time in October 2023 visiting various cultural organisations, artists, communities on a research trip funded by Clore Fellowship and Arts and Humanities Research Council. The research aimed to look at the Indian context and consider what it meant for us in the UK and indeed my own work. This paper is the result of that research. I don't begin to think I have understood all of the nuances, ways of working and realities of Socially Engaged Art Practices in a country that is not my own. These are simply my reflections and how I think they may be considered in our own context, here in the UK/global north.

The starting point of this reflection is a term I came across in all contexts: *Jugaad*. *Jugaad* is a Hindi-Urdu slang term meaning to 'hack' or using the resources you have in innovative ways (Sonwalkar, 2013). The word has several counterparts within many cultures and languages. In the UK, we may call it 'DIY', in France it might be 'bricolage', or in Japan: 'urazawa', etc. The term is used affectionately within Indian culture as an innovative and creative way to deal with challenges in the country in terms of regulations, fiscal investment, urgent needs and other issues that longer form and research-based means of development we may have access to

within the Global North are not available. It has an appeal in that it provides an accepted approach of ‘work arounds’ that get jobs done with limited resources in quick ways.



(Figure 1, Jugaad Innovation, Radjou, 2012)

While there are detractors of this frugal innovation ‘solution’ who see the *jugaad* as makeshift, unscalable and unsustainable (Govinjaradan, 2013) there have been many innovations and practices that have emerged from *jugaad* approaches in India and throughout the Global South - for example, mobile banking (Gaur et al, 2014), prosthetics (Magnier, 2012) and solar light bulbs (Orendain, 2011) - that provide solutions to real needs and have seen widespread use.

I heard the term ‘*jugaad*’ on my research trip time and time again, used as an apology, or a joke, or a fact. This term was interesting to me and caught a bit of the flavour of what I was experiencing with Socially Engaged Art practice in India. *Jugaad* was a way of innovating by using what you have to hand to do the very best, or find a new approach to getting the outcomes you need.

The term *jugaad* could therefore be considered a useful concept for Socially Engaged Art practice, as I am exploring this in this paper. *Jugaad* can be a short-term solution and left unchecked or unresolved, resulting in no longer term or sustained solution. However, it is a solution nonetheless to some of the challenges that are inherent within an Indian context for Socially Engaged Art practice. I am also going to make the case that *jugaad* is where solutions for Socially Engaged Art practice can start and develop from. I hope to suggest enacting *jugaad*

can be a way to apply shifts to push forward current Socially Engaged Art practice within the UK.

For the purpose of this paper, I am going to explore *jugaad* as innovation within a cultural sector and framework of Socially Engaged Art practice/community arts. Firstly, it's important to recognise the terms 'Socially Engaged Art practice' or 'community arts' are contested (Schrag, 2016). I am not here to define the practice as a whole, but will provide my own understanding of these terms. To me, a Socially Engaged Art practice is one where collaboration, challenge, dialogue, agreement (and disagreement) is part of the process of collective creation. An example is Chicago's Sweet Water Foundation where a group of people and an artist looked together at a specific issue (communities left behind by a lack of infrastructure and investment) and found ways to challenge, disrupt and alter the situation (ie, urban agriculture, art and education programmes revitalising and transforming vacant lots and abandoned buildings into classrooms and community spaces). Socially Engaged Art practice is a dialogue where, through art, we explore ourselves, our interpersonal relationships, our communities and our wider world and we find ways to activate it, expose it, challenge it, celebrate it, mourn it or invite a wider discussion or activism around it. It was birthed out of a community arts practice and sits in a grassroots context. Social engagement is not when an formed idea is introduced by an artist, organisation or hierarchy. It is about people starting movements together. I want to note that I understand that these terms are contested and nuanced but for the purposes of the paper, this is how I am approaching it.

During the research visit to India, I visited projects, artists and organisations working in the field of Socially Engaged Art practice in conflict zones, rural areas, slums, and cities. These projects were in places where people were marginalised due to complex issues relating to religion, caste, race, sex and income. This in turn created inequalities in terms of education, employment and access to basic services and rights. Those practising community based or Socially Engaged Art were therefore finding innovative solutions to support work via *jugaad*.

The Current Political Situation in India

In India the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has been the ruling party under Narendra Modi since 2014. Their rise is sometimes credited with a perceived change to a historical 'patronage' or 'clientele' democracy within India, which has historically modelled a 'votes for services' or 'client' based system that is often viewed as corrupt (Narang & Staniland, 2018). The BJP have defined their party and campaigns around an idea of reform and a sharp move away from this approach to democracy with promises of reforms to corruption, economic reform and a strengthened position globally - a 'cleaning up' of India which has been very popular (Crabtree, 2015).

The ideology of the BJP, especially in the post 2019 election era, has increased a call for 'Hindutva' (or Hindu-ness). Led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Hindu nationalism has come to entirely dominate the Indian political landscape (Ellis-Peterson, 2022). This lean into a right (nationalist) movement has seen Hindutva supported through policies like the revoiding of Article 307 on the governance of the Jammu and Kashmir region; amending the Citizen Amendment Act in 2019; and the introduction of statutes against religious conversions in states the party governs (Haas & Majumdar, 2023).

India does not have a specific cultural policy. It ratified the UNESCO Convention Act (2005) in 2006. Instead, the support for the cultural sector has been delegated through the Ministry of Culture to 'autonomous institutions, attached or subordinate offices and zonal cultural centres (a kind replacement for the non-existent ministries of culture at state and territory level)' (Hampel,

2020). The 1990 Haskar Report noted that state organisations were 'passive' and 'dysfunctional' when engaging with government policy and directives. This devolved approach creates a landscape where challenges of financing and transparency, arms length approaches, often more widely understood or 'preferred' forms of artistic output that centre 'professionalised' forms of practice, and no real joined-up approach creates challenges to the development of India's cultural diversity (Hampel, 2020).

All of this has implications for how the not-for-profit sector is understood, invested in and managed. It also impacts the diversity of the sector and its outputs and how artists exist within it which I will explore here.

Structures and Management of Socially Engaged Art Practice in the Indian Context

> *[The system seems] broken from the inside. There are so many barriers in place. Activism seen as an opposition. Being able to verbalise opposition is dangerous. Being seen even as passive or inactive is an act of opposition. We have to subvert, be secret.* - Theatre Charity Worker, Delhi, October 2023.*[1]

Socially Engaged Art practice in India is a non-traditional artform and therefore not within the 'intangible cultural heritage' to which UNESCO convention speaks. This is coupled with the fact that Socially Engaged Art practice works in arenas where discourses on politics or collaborations with groups of people who may have been marginalised creates a challenge of investment. In my interviews, again and again the challenge of an art form working 'against' policy was one of the most significant issues raised, as explored by the practitioner below:

> *I told my friend who runs a charity we were going to apply [for the Foreign Contributions Reform Act]. They told us to not even bother. When I asked why, they said, 'Because of who you work with. They will never give you money to work with who you do and do what you do'.* - Theatre Charity Worker, Delhi, October 2023.

The Foreign Contributions Reform Act (FCRA)

Due to an overall lack of government resources for investment, many charities seek foreign funding. However, to receive this funding, they need to get approval from the government to receive aid via the FCRA. Ratified in 2020, the current Foreign Contributions Reform Act officially is 'a mechanism to regulate the acceptance and utilisation of foreign contribution and foreign hospitality…to prohibit the acceptance of foreign contribution and hospitality deemed 'detrimental to the nation's interest' and 'curb corruptive investments or influences' (Deshpande, 2021).The 2010 ratification supports the government to control NGO organisations that are seen by the Indian government as involved in any 'anti-development activism' that could negatively influence economic growth (Doane, 2016).

On one hand, there are many rational reasons for such legislation, and with a long history of foreign states - such as the British Empire - meddling in India's politics, such an approach that ensures that external colonial pressures are curtailed seems justified. On the other hand, many internationally respected organisations, such as Amnesty International, Save the Children,

[1] **A note on interviews - during my research, I interviewed a variety of Socially Engaged Art practitioners. As I the reader will appreciate, I have anonymised all these subjects to protect their identities.*

Greenpeace India have had their FCRA applications revoked in recent years and there is a growing sense that domestic NGOs are being targeted (Davidson, 2023).

> *Because we cannot apply for funding for our work, I just try my contacts. I ring friends and ask them for donations. But that is drying up. I am thinking about how we can set up models of enterprise to break up that cycle - to earn the money we need to just do it ourselves and sustain ourselves.'* - Educational Charity Worker, Lucknow, October 2023.

The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (1967)

> *'My boyfriend was arrested for writing a song about free thought under the act. It was terrifying.'* - Artist, Delhi, Oct 2023

In response to a rise in terrorism and a desire to protect the Indian nation against threats, the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (1967) was amended in 2019 to make it possible to designate individuals who are seen as anti-government as terrorists 'without following any formal judicial process ((Poddar, 2019). The UAPA is also known as the 'Anti-terror law'.

Lawyer Rongeet Poddar wrote in the Oxford Human Rights Hub states: “Neither the Amendment Bill nor the parent statute provides a concrete definition of terrorism. This lack of a concrete definition is problematic as it leaves any act open to the interpretation of those in power, for their own ends and by their own means. Categorization as a 'terrorist' by the executive bears serious consequences, such as social boycott or loss of employment’.” (Poddar, 2019)

> *There was a sweep last month - a raid. Artists, journalists…friends of mine had the police come to their home. They do it to scare people - create fear. Prevent.* - Charity Leader and Artist, Delhi, October 2023

The law has both been celebrated for stopping violent acts, creating peace and developing legal protection and criticised for being practised in ways that suppress counter mainstream thought (ie from journalists, lawyers, human rights activists, artists etc).

Mehir Desai, a Human Rights Advocate notes it is “important to look at these laws which gives an exceptional power to the state over citizens -- to arrest them, to detain them, to charge them with offences which otherwise they may not be able to charge them with, keep them behind bars for years together, and also for ensuring that dissent in all forms is crushed”. (Desai, 2020)

Charity Governance

> *We cannot take money. You cannot be an employee. So we do a lot for free, we do a lot of consultancy and we use the funds we raise elsewhere (or are donated to us as individuals) to fund the work of the charity while we get started.* - Charity Founder, Bengaluru, October 2023

Due to the nature of an art form that does not produce a ‘product’ or commercial output, Socially Engaged Art practices rarely operate in a for-profit mode. Therefore, most operate as informal organisations and/or charities which come with significant challenges in India.

Under Section 8 of the Indian Companies Act, 'company must apply its profits, if any, or other

income to the promotion of its objects, and should not pay any dividend to its members', meaning trustees cannot receive remuneration. In practice, this means that those initiating charities need to have a level of wealth or security themselves which, in turn, means the sector is run by a more middle-class cohort, who have expendable resources to be able to volunteer in such positions.

India does not fare well in the Social Mobility Index, meaning less mobility for those from more diverse or underrepresented backgrounds, young people, women and girls etc wanting to take on leadership or have a wider voice in the charitable sector. As many Socially Engaged Art practices aim to speak directly to these demographics, an issue of 'representation' can emerge within the governance of charities.

There is also confusion of who can be on your board of directors. According to the Financial Management Services Foundation, charities in India cannot have foreign board members unless approved by the Central Government. In my conversations, there was a lot of misunderstanding around board make-up and a sense that diversity (or non-Hindu) members could put your organisation under scrutiny. This put pressure on organisations to be fearful of selecting the board representation they truly wanted:

> *You find yourself just putting names down [on your charity application] you know they will like to just get started. And those names will be Hindu names because they like those - they are the right kind of names.* - Charity CEO, Bengaluru, October 2023.

In all, this fear and uncertainty stops change and a widening of representation of charities at the very same time they themselves want to be more reflective of the changes it wants to generate.

How *Jugaad* Supports Socially Engaged Art Practice

The legal and socio-political conditions I have described above overlay creative practice within India. During my research, I was specifically interested in the ways Socially Engaged Art organisations adapted and innovated in relation to these pressures. It was clear that many of the organisations found creative (and some may say 'subversive') ways to bend the systems, or adapted to develop a best practice model of working that served the communities with which they were working. These were examples of *jugaad* in relation to Socially Engaged Art practice and I explore some of these below.

One organisation discussed with me the 'vanity projects' that private investors or corporate funders may put in place to be able to share in their networks that they are charitable and have a level of social responsibility in their identities. This, they stated, could often mean that the funding opportunities shift and change against trends and that Socially Engaged Art and 'non-traditional' art forms are seen as sometimes malleable or can 'slot in'. A conversation that would be unlikely to happen within India's more traditional and revered art forms.

When Socially Engaged/community arts is not seen as valuable but malleable, it was up to many organisations and artists to *jugaad*, to find a way to subvert, to shift the position of privilege to their benefit and make the system work for them:

> *Sometimes funds available come from a place where people have a lot more privilege and capacity than the communities we are working with. Take*

> *environmental projects, which is a trend at the moment. We want the money to have the opportunity to do the work, but the communities have more pressing issues than, say, water rights. They are dealing with the fact they have no agency at all, no choices, no voice to make change. So we will take the funding and make a play about water rights to please the funder, and create a play about a water king who controls all the water in the land and the people who challenge and depose the king together. Then we are back to speaking about what I am interested in - power.* - Charity CEO, Delhi, Oct 2023.

For another organisation, they used what was perceived to be the more 'high art form' of theatre practice to create outputs that funders, hierarchies and government bodies understood (and would support). Within this however, they found ways to *jugaad where* the work was situated (i.e. outside theatre spaces), who was invited (audiences who cannot normally afford to pay for 'high art'), when it took place, who is helping to make, who has paid roles etc. The act of the performance event and not the actual content of the production could become the *jugaad* of the work:

> *I am often asked if it is arts or activism? But activism is more than the artistic work itself. The politic of it all is also in the decision as to where to perform, where to display, how much (or do you) charge, what time of day to present it, if there is going to be transport? Those decisions are where the real activism lies.* - Conversation with Charity Leader, Bengaluru, October 2023

Artists and cultural workers interviewed felt almost unanimously that the very act of being artist and working within the Socially Engaged Art practice sector was an act of subversion, where *jugaad* was applicable within the way they themselves not only operated, but lived their lives under the current Indian government. By working in areas where the government is not supporting or investing (ie within conflict zones, or with railway children that are marginalised by the country and not able to obtain aid) there is a *jugaad* happening within the artist practising the work themselves. They are making a statement that the norms are not working and that there *is* a another way ensure that agency and support are given in times of need and conflict, no matter the risks or the lack of resources:

> *[Here in India we are] more about ideas and less about protocols and processes or policies. I have lots of room for discussion to sense what is possible and not. Dialogue, interaction, shared understanding…* - Artist, Srinagar, October 2023

The very act of working with conflict zones is not explicitly funded or supported, and engaging in such work can be punished. Yet rather than shy away from it, it appears that socially minded organisations and artists are leaning into it, albeit under a cloak of invisibility. They are not telling the government they are working with certain groups or with certain dynamics, flying under radars, as explained by an artist:

> *We are working in conflict, with people who have PTSD from the fact there has always been a war where they live. With people who have been managed, policed and punished. We need to work with them to bring about a healing - that is so important. To introduce critical thinking. To get them to dream of a new paradigm. So we do this with art and they [the schools] maybe don't even know that is what we are doing. They think it is art for art's sake, just workshops, but we are working hard here to make change.* - Artist, Kashmir, October 2023

The *jugaad* approach of hacking or solving problems quickly and with the resources to hand is often applied to other global contexts in ways that may be similar or radically different to India. In Belarus, during the 2020 anti-government uprisings artists, activist groups and other groups experiencing oppression banded together and created a system of symbolism, allegory, or coded languages to discuss in a subverted or *jugaad* way critical messages that were subversive and quickly spread (Kopenkina, 2022), innovating a new language. In Thailand, Theatre of the Oppressed is being used to have conversations about the lack of democracy in a monarchical system as well as gender inequality. Malongdu Theatre has examined issues ranging from the micro to the macro, including homelessness, people with disabilities, sexual harassment, caring for the terminally ill, bullying, Hong Kong protests etc' (Mahavongtrakul, 2022). In Italy, the rise in migratory immigration and the hyper-local desire to soothe and engage those effected by it created ways to re-deploy public spaces for community and social art as means to have necessary conversations that were not being held or supported by regional governments (Meschini & Rattalino, 2022). Even within the UK, within the Disability arts sector, the 'care-cared for' dynamic has long been taken, used and subverted in many ways to create protest and activism, to *jugaad* for new approaches that to bring focus to and raise awareness of equality and access rights (Evans, 2022).

These examples above and specifically those within my own research have shown innovative practice in the face of rigid systems. Practices that often aim to critique socio-political frameworks or engender debate through creative expression. They are useful to reflect on when Socially Engaged Art practice is itself, facing a paradigm shift and a potential crisis point in terms of its own relevance and support. They offer insights that may offer us our own reflections on our operations here in the Global North.

A Question about Western Approaches and Applications

> *Culture cannot live in peace with management, particularly with an obtrusive and insidious management, and most particularly with a management aimed at twisting the culture's exploring/experimenting urge so that it fits into the frame of rationality the managers have drawn.* - (Zygmunt Bauman, 2010)

Here in the UK in only the last few years, we have had new laws affecting the powers of police (Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act, 2022), laws controlling rights to strike (Minimal Services Act, 2023), performance challenges to our health care provision (Ham, 2023), cost of living crisis (Harari et al, 2024), rise in racist crime (Home Office, 2022), rising income inequality (Equality Trust, 2022), distrust in current democracy (Mason, 2022) and a reduction in resources to our charitable sector (Charities Aid Foundation, 2023).

With this ever increasing restrictive climate, there is a call for a paradigm shift: a means to seek ways to be adaptive; to not seek permission, but slip through structures and challenge our rule makers and inherited systems. We need to test and share the learnings and the approaches with policy makers and funders so they can remake frameworks and change ways of thinking and doing. This *jugaad* is a means towards an alternative approach to solving needs and challenges and should be adopted as part of our own approach to the art form.

Whilst this might seem an abstract call, the concerns are entirely practical: The other day, a producer told me they could not take a group of elderly and socially isolated residents in extra care schemes to a social prescribing workshop in a local park where they would be drawing *en plein* with an artist. The reason was they had to wait 6 weeks to obtain a Temporary Events Notice which they needed from the council in order to hold the event. These residents have not

been able to visit a greenspace due to access needs (some for many years). Consider what it means to say 'no' to this vulnerable group of people? Don't we want to find ways to support more environmental access and wellbeing in our older residents? Why can't a group of people hold an art event in a park without having to go through this process? Isn't there an alternative to a 6 week permission process to support more connectivity to our parks and greenspaces? How can we be subversive or challenge or find new ways to counter this? After seeing the incredible work in India that happens in more extreme contexts, there have to be alternatives we can find here in the UK.

These issues don't only concern artists, but arts managers too: A charity told me they "closed their eyes and signed" a funding agreement the other day that allowed the investor to attend all board meetings and see all board papers. While oversight is important, surely regulatory bodies like the Charities Commission who exist to offer this oversight are already in place: What is the message we are sending to our grassroots charities when investors want to be in the room when decisions are being made about services they don't have expertise in? What can we do to disrupt or subvert this call for oversight? Can the charity ask then in turn to be in the boardrooms of the funders themselves? Or can we bring them closer to the values and the impact of the work by introducing them directly to stakeholders and clients at AGMs or events? How we can stop this top down, parent-child approach?

In another example, an organisation working with recent migrant and refugee arrivals was told that their board was not representative enough by a funder. How though, when you are a new arrival to the UK, where English is not your first language, when you also have likely not served on a board of trustees before and where your first and most important thought is how you will survive and sustain yourself in this new country? What would be the value of being on a governance structure at this point for them in their journey into the UK? Why would we ask them to conform to antiquated models of 'democracy' that put pressures on people rather than empower them? Is there another and better way to involve them in collective decision making that is situated around the projects and events happening in their lives right now that would be better and more generative? Is being part of producing the work and shaping the programmes themselves a better way to engage and bring them onto board leadership at a time that works for them? Surely a *jugaad* way to see this from another perspective and another approach is needed: can we challenge the funder on this request as to where we need to put energy?

These external pressures are also limiting important work with vulnerable people: I am aware of a disability-led arts organisation who do fantastic work to support diversity in the cultural sector and offer a space for new d/Deaf and disabled artists (mostly younger people) to test and develop their practice. They recently shared with me that they are not going to make funding applications because accessing the forms and understanding the jargon (and articulating and obtaining the resources needed to really do their work) was a barrier to them. How could we get resources moving into places where the impact would be the greatest? Could we provide more seed funding without requiring outcomes? More investment that supports future thinking and ambitions and worries less about track records (which again, continue to invest in the same people and the same outcomes in perpetuity)? Could funders help more on the ground with making applications possible? Could we encourage more funding based on conversations and collaborations rather than filling out forms to a central office?

In these instances (and in so many others), the blockage, the hold-up, the inability to be responsive and generous and reasonable to support more urgent care in our world is an issue with management as much as it is an acceptance of structures in place. As Bauman suggests, 'culture cannot live in peace with management.' So now, with our management structures in the

UK tightening up, might we need to be mindful, watchful that we aren't overly managed? We need to hold hands with the findings of *jugaad* in India and be prepared to acknowledge and lean into the paradigm shift that is happening post-global pandemic and use it to embrace new ways of working and seeking means to solve problems. We need to find our own hacks - across the sector.

What I want us to do as a sector in the UK is to be alert and aware of the rapidly tightening world of management we have in place currently and not be complacent about it: to apply that *jugaad*, that hacking, that working to subvert and work within the limitations of resources and permissions within our own contexts. We need to find ways to support our partners, our communities, our teams, our investors and our commissioners to also be aware of the other ways, the new ways, the untested ways that we can work in the system to challenge it. Most importantly to learn from these subversions and testings and share the hacks we have together in order to make the work better and braver.

When we *jugaad* to challenge, subvert or change the experience of interacting with the work or the organisation to have a more critical dialogue about our own 'cultural' contexts in the UK. When we see the imperfections and are aware of the limitations, we can better prepare to counter them and change them.

About

Kim Wide is the founder, Artistic Director and Joint CEO of the UK's leading socially engaged arts organisation, Take A Part. Founded in 2009, Take A Part exists to creatively develop models of activism that support community change.

Hailing from Canada, Kim has a background in the heritage sector working with the Government of Ontario, City of Toronto Heritage Services and Museum of Health Care at Kingston before relocating to the UK. In England, Kim worked for contemporary visual art centre ArtSway and Equata, the South West Disability Arts Development Agency before forming Take A Part.

Kim is keen to challenge societal 'norms' and rebalance injustice by creatively exploring and developing models of agency and activism. Her work focuses on creative projects, placemaking, social enterprise development, educational programmes, infrastructure models, governance and organisational development approaches that allow people to try new things, meet new people, learn new skills and make the type of cultural, heritage, environmental and place-based initiatives that represents their ideas and themselves - taking on leadership and activism roles in setting their own agendas to lead on their own change.

Kim built Take A Part from a pilot project to become an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation, developed Social Making, the UK's only biennial symposium dedicated to arts and social change and established 8 other creative community social enterprises/cultural organisations (nationally and internationally).

Kim is a Clore Fellow. She was awarded an MBE in 2021 for 'Services to Social Engagement in the Arts', the first time social practice in the arts has been honoured by the Crown.

kim@takeapart.org.uk

Acknowledgements:

Huge thank you to the collaborators and supporters of this work for the resources, networks and time committed to the work. A very special thanks to Dr Anthony Schrag for his support as my supervisor.

[Logos needed are Calouste Gulbenkian, Take A Part, Queen Margaret University, Arts and Humanities Research Council, Clore Leadership]