

React, Respond and Reflect: Covid-19 Response Report

"It came at just the right time, through a particularly difficult phase of managing both the Covid-19 pandemic and the effects of the Black Lives Matter movement on my organisation. To connect with people going through similar things was incredibly valuable, both in terms of solidarity and learning about other approaches."

Participant feedback from Small Group Conversations (July 2020)

As with the entire arts and culture sector, Clore Leadership have had to radically shift our expectations for 2020 in response to the global pandemic and subsequent crises that have dominated all aspects of life. Whilst our original plans for the year were disrupted, the impact of Covid-19 also presented us with an opportunity to re-assess what we do, how we do it and, most importantly, who we do it for. Like other organisations, we have had to pivot our delivery quickly and, at times, with limited foresight. Through all of this, our guiding principle has been to ask the question: "What do leaders in the culture sector require now, and how might we provide support?"

The following report shares the ways in which Clore Leadership has listened, innovated and pivoted delivery during 2020 to ensure that we continue to embody our values of excellence, inclusivity and learning.

Data has been gathered from a number of sources: participation statistics; monitoring forms; surveys completed by participants; social media responses to Clore Leadership output; feedback from facilitators and other partners; and internal assessment of impact & resources.

Whilst it is challenging to scientifically measure an organisation's ability to respond to crisis, our hope is that the information collated here will help tell a story of adaptability, awareness of need, responsiveness to changed demand and, ultimately, support for the arts and culture sector that is in need of great leadership now, more than ever. Our ambition is to further develop our programming and ways of working in order to underscore the ongoing relevance and contribution of Clore Leadership to sector resilience and renewal.

"Taking a moment to thank Clore Leadership for setting up the space for measured, valuable and honest conversation facilitated by Fearghus Ó Conchúir. Today's first session was something very special - such a warm, supportive and valuable group. Excited for more."

Small Group Conversations Participant

Our Reaction: Programming from March to July 2020

After addressing the shifting online, postponing and cancelling of all programmes that were mid-delivery, the team moved into reaction mode, experimenting with a range of new online offerings based on the evolving thematic priorities influenced by Covid-19. Importantly, this new programming also enabled us to re-engage many of our Associates and Contributors who, as freelancers or small businesses, were facing a period of cancellations. Our offer included:

- New **Perspectives on Leadership** on the Clore Leadership website bringing together resources on [Crisis Management](#) and Leadership in Action;
- A weekly '[Leading from a Distance](#)' video blog series providing sector-wide access to the reflections, views and opinions of our programme Associates and contributors;
- A series of topically themed and solutions-focused **webinars**:
 - [Furloughing – What it is and How to do it Well](#)
 - [Building Resilience – International Perspectives](#)
 - [Steering the Ship – Prioritising the Future-Facing Role of the Board](#)
 - [This Event Takes Place Online – Leaders and Digital Culture Consumption](#)
 - [Lessons Learned: Innovation, Collaboration and Taking Time](#)
- '**Clore Connected**', a series of interventions responding to the needs of Clore Leadership alumni as identified through a targeted questionnaire. This included:
 - A weekly 'Drop In' conversation hosted by our Facilitators around a topical theme, providing a space to share and work through leadership challenges.
 - Peer mentoring opportunities, where Clore Leadership matched alumni for 1:1 conversations.
- [Small-Group Conversations](#), offering a group-coaching / action learning format for up to ten participants. Initially trialled with Clore Leadership alumni, this programme was opened up to the wider sector after the first round of sessions.
- [Brilliant Routes: Space for Change](#), presented a series of online events to support the immediate needs of Black leaders and those seeking to respond to the challenges of career progression in our industries. This content, originally planned for Autumn 2020, was accelerated in response to the #BlackLivesMatter movement for change. The programme also connected with senior (White) leaders in organisations offering a complimentary space for discussion and exploration of ways to respond effectively to the challenges and opportunities being presented.
- [Clore Leadership Experience](#); a short form 4-week course featuring content typical of our residential courses. This series was designed specifically for cultural sector workers on furlough or finding themselves out of work, encompassing themes of Managing Teams, Influence & Impact, Finance and Governance
- We also delivered the first set of **Coaching Conversations** sessions in July, a new programme developed in collaboration with Diverse City and Coach Sarah

Pickthall to strengthen the network of experienced D/deaf and disabled coaches.

The above offers were largely delivered free to users, with the exception of Small-Group Conversations and Brilliant Routes, which were offered on a 'Pay-What-You-Decide' model; and Clore Leadership Experience which was offered at a cost of £17.50 per session (with multi-buy discounts available).

"I wanted to send a quick note of appreciation and thanks for Clore's activity during this pandemic. I am connecting with my own cohort, and also appreciating the opportunity for the conversations that are being facilitated. The tone and approach feels right for where people are, and the openness is very helpful. It feels like Clore has my back right now, at a time when it is most needed. I can't work right now (furlough) so this is helping me to keep in touch with my professional sector, and find ways to support others too."

Clore 15 Fellow, May 2020

The Response: Numbers

Between March and July 2020:

6,489 engagements¹ across 30 free online offers
194 bookers for our sold out paid-for offers
750 new sign ups to the Clore Leadership mailing list
4,766 views for our Leading from a Distance video series

77% of Small Group Conversations participants 'extremely likely' to recommend to colleagues and friends

88% of Brilliant Routes participants 'likely' to recommend the sessions.

86% of Clore Leadership Experience participants 'extremely' or 'quite likely' to recommend the course.

The Response: Feedback

This period has been an opportunity for Clore Leadership to widen our reach through online offers and interventions. It is clear that extending our programming and

¹ 'engagement' refers to any online count (e.g. 'views' on YouTube video or registered participants in Webinars). The total figure stated does not, therefore, equate to 6,489 individuals engaging with content – it is likely that most people engaged with multiple items of content.

creating new offers is creating a ripple effect in allowing those already connected to signpost our offer more widely.

Clare Connected was a way for us to understand what support our alumni needed. Through this we created responsive programming and used this opportunity to open up beyond our network to the sector. For **Small Group Conversations**, we asked participants which three things they were hoping to achieve (see word cloud) and 88% felt their expectations were met, 50% of those saying they were completely met with the sessions provided.

"It was useful to hear a different art form perspective and approaches to new ways of connecting with audiences."

"It was useful for me to learn in detail about the challenges being faced by a senior manager in a different part of the cultural sector."

"Really good to discuss challenges we are all facing with other professionals in the wider arts - not just in my sector. Helps give you a different perspective from what your own sector is talking about."



Whilst the accelerated delivery for **Brilliant Routes: Space for Change** was a challenge, evaluation responses show that the timing and content of the offer met a specific need.

"I found it really helpful, supportive and it felt like a very safe space to discuss challenging issues. I know that this was only the case because Hilary and Gaylene actively created that space... [they] talked about leaning into uncertainty and engaging with the language - and realities - of possibilities that this uncertainty brings... to embrace the exciting opportunities that come from being aware of my own biases, and confronting them, and keeping actively anti-racist action at the core of our work."

"Thank you so much to your team for organising this course - it really felt like a lifeline in these difficult times and I can already start to see its impact on my perspectives and actions as a cultural leader. I'm looking forward to further involvement in the [...] future.

Participants, Clore Leadership Experience

Our Reflection: Taking the Learning Forward

As well as analysing our response to the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on Clore Leadership, we have been keen to assess how our support will continue to benefit individuals, organisations and the sector at large. Whilst our initial response to the pandemic lockdown focussed on existing networks, our new programming has created new points of entry into leadership training for many in the sector. At our core, Clore Leadership is an organisation whose purpose is to support the identification, growth, development and networking of cultural leaders. The more open we can be to everyone in the sector, the better we can achieve that purpose.

There have been some notable successes. We are also pleased to see the germination of a number of self-sustaining networks amongst participants and cohorts, helping to ensure that peer-support can be readily accessed. Small Group Conversations will continue in Autumn 2020 and beyond. We are also adapting this model to fit specific areas of the sector, including governance. This area of programming is also allowing us to expand our pool of facilitators – creating more work for freelancers with coaching and facilitating experience. Likewise, the Clore Leadership Experience has extended our reach, creating the opportunity to condense the longer form residential programming to suit an entirely online audience. We repeated sessions for the Emerging Futures conference (September 2020) and are also planning to deliver a second set of content in December 2020 as well as repetitions of all content again in 2021.

This period has shaped our considerations of risk, budgeting, and fundraising and updated our perspectives on sector priorities and needs. [A survey of the sector in July 2020](#) gave us a clear understanding of where organisations were struggling to preserve time and financial resources to support leadership training. Our response has been to increase the number and level of bursaries that support our existing programming (Fellowships, Leadership Pulse & Emerging Leaders courses). Ensuring that we deliver as much of our programming as possible at affordable levels (often free) to those who need it most is driving our future planning and strategy.

The Covid period has challenged how all of us work individually and collectively and forced us to find new ways of coming together, to become accepting of our own limitations and circumstances, which in turn challenges our own biases of others. This is important learning to consider in future programming about what empathetic and inclusive leadership really means in a pandemic-influenced world. Most notably, the past six months have shown the ability of Clore Leadership to respond quickly,

intelligently and effectively to the new normal. We will continue to evolve as we learn from the adaptation of existing programmes and the creation of new content designed to support the sector. Our aspiration is for everyone we engage with to join us on this same journey to help ensure the future survival, and flourishing, of arts and culture.