

Phase 1: one page summaries London Leadership Network events June 2008 to April 2009

The inaugural London leadership network event: Working together to shape London's future 26 June 2008 at the Emirates Stadium



Overview

This event kicked off the London Leadership Network. It aimed to develop a shared vision of London that crosses borough boundaries and sectors, and to get people engaged in working on the four challenges that the Collaborative would tackle over the coming year.

The four challenges were introduced by their respective chief executive champion: behaviour change (Gillian Norton, Richmond), population flows (Barry Quirk, Lewisham), worklessness (Mike More, Westminster) and carbon reduction (Hugh Dunnachie, Hillingdon). Groups session began to scope out what form these workstreams should take, and people 'signed up' to participate.

Keynote speakers at the event were Councillor Merrick Cockell (Chairman, London Councils), Ian Clement (Deputy Mayor of London), Geoff Mulgan (Director The Young Foundation) and Dame Ellen McArthur. There were also many prominent London figures from the public, private and voluntary sectors who hosted cafe conversations about future prospects for the capital.

Over 160 network members attended and over a hundred signed up to work on the four challenges.

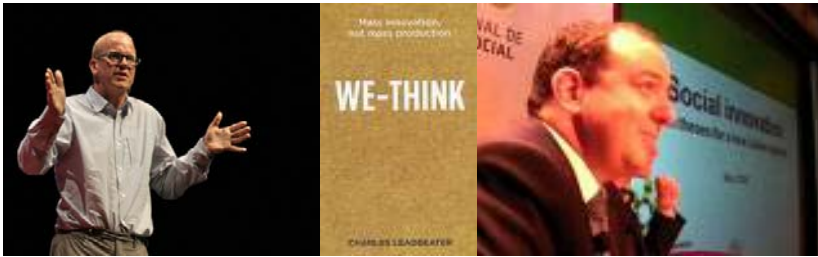
Feedback

Feedback from the day was positive. Participants were asked to rate the event from 0 to 6 (where 6 is the best possible score) according to different criteria e.g. was the event a valuable use of time, did they want to engage further in the project, had there been enough opportunities to participate. The average score was 4.9.

Participants said that they appreciated the levels of collaborative energy, inspiration and purpose, and the presence of chief executives. When the participants were asked what had struck them most about the day, answers included: "The energy of the participants. Themes seemed well presented and the group provided good insight into some of the productive outcomes possible from a London-wide perspective" and "The willingness of participants to engage in "out of the box" discussions, it really did transcend borough/local debate". Some felt the day was too long and there were calls for extending the network more across public sector.

Ideas evening: public sector Innovation

7 October at the Magic Circle



Overview

More than 35 network members met at the Magic Circle to attend the London Collaborative first ideas evening. Innovation is a theme running through the Collaborative. Network members shared their own experiences of innovative work within and between boroughs, and were joined by two speakers to discuss user generated and technology-stimulated innovation.

Charlie Leadbeater of **Participle** explored the challenges of thinking innovatively within organisations and our tendency to build on what we've got (like buying more fire engines) rather than thinking of radical new interventions (like buying more smoke alarms instead). He also encouraged network members to think about the role of local authorities as orchestrators of social innovation across the public, voluntary and community sectors.

Diogo Vasconcales, **Cisco** Senior Advisor and partner in **Social Innovation Exchange**, explored the options for technology to revolutionise the way London's citizens both work together and with public services.

Network members reflected on the balance between having safe spaces to take risks and the fact that a sense of crisis is often what engenders the need for innovation. Support from chief executives and leaders was also seen a key factor in creating an enabling environment for innovation.

Feedback

Network members were enthusiastic about the opportunity and time to share ideas. One participant said that it had helped him to think of certain challenges in a different way; another said that the evening brought sharp and relevant analysis of the fundamentals of innovation, and others recommended a longer event to explore ideas further.

Ideas evening: models of problem solving

3 November at OPM

Overview

The London Collaborative held its second ideas evening at OPM's offices on 3rd November. Over 30 members of the London Leadership Network attended.

This session was designed to give members the opportunity to use different 'thinking models' to address the same question: how we might raise the aspirations of young men across the capital? The five groups used the following models of systems thinking:

- narrative/metaphor
- futures
- collaging
- taking different perspectives

Participants' experiences were shared in a plenary discussion at the end of the evening and the range of different perspectives compared.

Feedback

Feedback was very positive. One participant said that the session provided an "excellent opportunity" to explore new ways of working, and another said that he would take away new ideas for facilitating problem solving sessions and that it would enrich his leadership style. For others it was regarded as a networking opportunity or as "stimulating time out".

When asked what could have been done differently, a few members suggested a longer event in order to have the opportunity to try out all of the different techniques.

"Thank you for doing this - it was wonderful to be challenged like this in such a learning environment".

London Leadership Network member

A Conversation with Rosabeth Moss Kanter: Challenges and opportunities of collaborative leadership in large cities

5 November at the BT Tower

Overview

This was a lively conversation attended by about 40 leadership network members and chief executives.

Speaking the day after the US elections, Rosabeth was able to share her insights into Barack Obama's style of leadership and what his victory will mean for America. The conversation with the audience centred on how collaboration starts and grows, succeeds or fails, and what the challenges to collaboration are in a big city.



Specific tips on collaborative leadership in large cities– especially in hard times – that emerged from the dialogue were:

- **Values and principles** are the bedrock of collaborative leadership because everything else can, and does, change. Getting agreement on values has to come before specific actions, and we have to come back to them again and again.
- **Move quickly from conversation to action:** once people have been brought together it is important to identify specific goals as soon as possible so as to ensure that people continue to engage.
- People brought together to achieve things should be treated as **volunteers** – constant communication, motivation, thank yous, etc. are important.
- **Public communication and reassurance** are crucial in the kind of economic crisis we face now.
- There are opportunities in the crisis: using **stimulus packages** to fix society as well as the economy.
- **A positive focal point** or event like the Olympics for London can stimulate collaboration.
- **Perspectives on time and cycles** are important (anything can look like a failure in the middle), and while we can't plan for everything we can be prepared and think through consequences (including holding 'pre-mortems').

Feedback

Participants were enthusiastic about having the time and space to share ideas and the opportunity to attend an informal and intimate session with such a renowned management thinker.

"I was one of the people fortunate to be at the Prof. Kanter session and have been meaning to contact you to say thank you for organising such a stimulating and interesting meeting. It was great to have an opportunity to hear Prof. Kanter's views on a range of issues and there were a number of practical ideas which I am going to carry through in my work here at Sutton."

London Leadership Network member

Learning event: Working with universities and academics

21 November 2008 at Church House, Westminster

Overview

OPM led a learning event on 21 November, in Westminster, focused on improving partnership working between academics/universities and London's public services. A total of 28 people attended the event, which included a mix of 18 senior London Borough officers and 6 academics based in London universities.

Attendees heard a keynote presentation from Professor Chris Hamnett from King's, and took part in group discussions both about the implications of specific research work for public services, and the priority actions to improve partnership working. This was followed by series o session showcasing research projects from academics from Kings, UCL, Queen Mary and LSE. Topics included zero carbon housing, social mixing policy and gentrification, co-production and social care, and educational attainment in London boroughs.

Participants also discussed possible ways to improve the dialogue between academics and public sector managers. The top priorities included:

- **Online interface and more networking events** to allow both parties to find out *'who is doing what'* and promote greater awareness and understanding between the two sides.
- **Lead and key points of contact** A clear need for a first point of contact should be made available for people contacting Universities for research. On the local government side it was suggested that there was a need for a 'research lead officer' whose role would be to map relevant and available academics, coordinate and procure research, and sustain relationships and outcomes.
- **PhDs and placements:** It was suggested that greater academic input could be achieved by LAs sponsoring locally focussed PhDs. It was also suggested that placements in LG for post doctoral researchers could be an effective.



the london collaborative

...and potential solutions

- "academics do a lot of very useful research, but this rarely trickles down to us because we seldom have time to [e.g.] read journals ... if they could somehow make this accessible and let us know that they are doing research that would affect us, even include us"
- "we do see the universities as an untapped resource and are looking at ways we can better engage with them"
- "partnership working between academics and managers is the way forward as long as both sides respect and understand the various facets of providing public services"
- "resolution [of these challenges] is through clear project scoping, good relationship management and communication"

Left: results from a survey of LLN members about how they thought the relationship with academics could be improved.

Feedback

Feedback from participants suggests the event was found to be a very positive experience, and a number of academics – including Prof. Hamnett – have been in touch subsequently to pick up on the suggestions made to improve the dialogue between academics and public sector managers.

Learning event: comparing lessons from world cities
An exchange with senior officials from Beijing Municipality
12 December 2008 Sadler's Wells Theatre



Overview

The delegation of Beijing officials was in London to explore creativity, change and innovation in public services. In addition to this event, the delegation also spent an afternoon hosted by Greenwich Council. The visitors included directors or deputies from the following areas: HR, public housing, parks, infrastructure, education, policy and law, culture and media. Councils here were keen to learn about the Olympics but we asked both visitors and leadership network members for other areas of interest reflected in the group discussions on:

- Challenges and opportunities in responding to climate change
- The role of culture and creative industries in cities and regeneration
- Making complex cities work – collaboration
- Broader regeneration and other benefits from of Olympic Games

Many common challenges were identified: winning hearts and minds of millions of citizens for action on climate change; the tendency of departments and different parts of the structure to work in silos; the fact that both capitals host national and world famous cultural institutions but need to encourage wider participation in cultural and sports activities at a local level.

A presentation on scenarios prefaced a discussion of the impact of the recession.

Feedback

Different structures, political cultures as well as the need for interpreters are barriers to easy communication, particularly in a short session, but some valuable contacts for further exchanges were made. Sutton have already sent more information to Beijing colleagues, and Greenwich are following up more specific lessons on Olympic planning and business involvement.

55 people in total attended the event. The visitors found contact with the London Collaborative among the most relevant parts of their three week stay in the UK. Only a few network members filled in feedback forms which were positive.

Learning event: Leadership styles

29 January 2009 at the BT Tower

Overview

This was a lively and thought-provoking half-day event. 50 members of the London Leadership Network attended, along with the chief executives of seven London boroughs, Greater London Authority, BT Local Government and London First.

The purpose of the event was to give the members of the London Leadership Network insights into the kinds of leadership it takes to make change happen in London, and to hear personal experience and views from a range of current leaders. It was also an opportunity to further explore the underpinning themes of the London Collaborative: resilience, collaboration, adaptive capacity and strategic thinking.

Keynote speakers included Alwen Williams of Tower Hamlets PCT, Martin Smith of Tower Hamlets Council, Leo Boland of the GLA, and Jo Valentine of London First. The rest of the session was spent in café-conversations led by chief executives on leadership styles and successes: Chris Sayers, Local Government, BT; Derrick Anderson, Lambeth; Ged Curran, Merton; Rob Leak, Enfield; Joe Duckworth, Newham; Paul Martin, Sutton; Jo Valentine, London First; Leo Boland, Greater London Authority, and Annie Shepperd, Southwark.

A few observations from the conversations include:

- London's leaders share similar problems and challenges.
- It is possible to be a different kind of leader for different kinds of tasks and circumstances. Any chief executive will have been several types of leader throughout his or her career.
- Different kinds of leaders can reach the same objectives - there is not just one model for success.
- Leaders continually reflect and work on their styles of leadership
- Partnership working should start with an issue that doesn't divide opinion, like child poverty, and then when trust and effective ways of working have been built other less cohesive issues can be tackled.
- Delegates appreciated how personable, approachable and willing to share their experiences the CEs were.
- The need for time to think and reflect was emphasised by network members and CEs, and leaders have a role in legitimising and modelling taking time out for this purpose.
- Secondments across boroughs and sectors were strongly supported.

Feedback

"I left with a renewed commitment to make the time and contribute to London's leadership and to think about the transition of the organisation to equip it for the future (back at the ranch). This was one the best London Collaborative events I've been to. Many thanks."

London Borough Chief Executive

Ideas evening: entrepreneurial leadership

12 March 2009 at Community Links

Overview

London leadership members were invited to Community Links in Canning Town to meet with a panel of experts in social enterprise to consider what it takes to be an entrepreneurial and creative leader.

Speakers included **Kevin Jenkins OBE**, Co-Founder of Community Links and winner of the Beacon Prize for Community Builder for his work with the children and young people of Newham and **Steve Wylor**, Director, Development Trusts Association, one of the leading networks of community enterprise practitioners dedicated to helping people set up development trusts and helping existing development trusts learn from each other and work effectively.

Key points that arose in the discussions included:

- Start with a belief: social entrepreneurs will always take knocks along the way and belief in the cause and the people you are working with is what enables them to survive.
- Be bold and take risks: enterprising individuals will almost certainly be working against certain systems and structures
- Grow *with* your own people: it is important to believe in your staff's and community's abilities and not to 'parachute in' expertise from elsewhere. At Community Links, the majority of the staff were also original service users.
- You are only as good as your last session. It is important not to get complacent and to work hard to maintain reputation.
- Charities are also businesses and social start-ups must be self- sustaining. There is often funding available for bright and new ideas but if a social enterprise is to survive long term it must be able to generate its own revenue.
- Social enterprises never start looking anything like the end product; they begin as very small ideas executed well.

Feedback

Feedback from the evening was very positive. All of the attendees gave the event five or six, where six is the best, in terms of value for time.

"Inspiring to hear the leadership stories."

London Leadership Network member